

T H E  
Grounds and Foundation  
O F  
Natural Religion,  
DISCOVER'D,  
IN THE  
Principal BRANCHES of it, in  
Opposition to the Prevailing NOTI-  
ONS of the Modern Scepticks and La-  
titudinarians.  
WITH  
AN INTRODUCTION concern-  
ing the Necessity of REVEALED  
RELIGION.

By *Tho. Becconsfall*, B. D. and Fellow of  
*Brafenose Colledge*, in *Oxford*.

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The Reader is desired to make the following Amendments:

ADD *and*, line 23. p. 4. *them*, read *Revelation*, p. 6. l. 9. *the* r. *this*, p. 18. l. 18. add *an* after *and*, p. 26. l. 16. omit *of*, p. 28. l. 12. omit *if*, p. 29. l. 25. *to* r. *of*, p. 38. l. 4. add *if*, p. 39. l. 28. add *en* to *graved*, p. 43. l. 12. *we* r. *be*, p. 46. l. 12. *Rev.* r. *Lev.* p. 48. l. 19. *of* r. *for*, l. 22. *ib.* add *there are* after *and*, p. 48. l. 25. add *only* after *not*, p. 89. l. 11. *Conscientia* r. *Conscientia*, p. 92. *distate* r. *distates*, p. 114. l. 19. *Intrusion* r. *Invasion*, p. 135. l. 7. add *any* after *away*, p. 136. l. 9. omit *it*, p. 140. l. 9. add *as* after *well*, p. 140. l. 28. *from* r. *the*, p. 151. l. 26. *yes* r. *yes*, p. 161. l. 19. omit *ibo*, p. 169. l. 22. add *his* before *Offspring*, p. 180. l. 1. *Portion* r. *Notion*, p. 185. l. 2. *Natures* r. *Nature*, p. 242. l. 8. omit *is*, p. 254.

In the Preface *stand* r. *stands*.

In the Introduction, omit *Men*, p. 2. l. 8. omit *his*, p. 8. l. 23. *παριστάται* r. *παροίκαται*, for *παύει* r. *παύει*, for *παύει* r. *παύει* *ἐπὶ* r. *παύει* *ἐπὶ*, for *διαδομῶν* r. *διαδομῶν*, p. 11. *εὐθεῖαν* r. *εὐθείαν*, for *ὁρμημένους* r. *ὁρμημένους*, for *γίνεσθαι* r. *γίνεσθαι*, p. 12. *ἐπόμενοι* r. *ἐπόμενοι*, for *πάλαι* r. *πάλαι*, for *ἰσχυρὰ* r. *ἰσχυρὰ*, p. 13. *Agreeably* r. *agreeable*, p. 14. l. 8. *Author's* r. *Author*, p. 16. l. 11. *Principles* r. *Principle*, p. 17. l. 8. omit *is* after *and*, *submitted* r. *subscribed*, p. 16. l. 20, 21. or r. *and* l. 4. omit *more*, l. 13. *His* *Obedience* r. *Disobedience*, l. 16. p. 19. Omit *all* after *we*, p. 22. l. 9. *Or* r. *on*, p. 24. l. 10. *They* r. *Men*, p. 27. l. 9. *Sic* r. *Cic*, p. 36. l. 25. *Weight* r. *height*, p. 38. l. 4. Omit *the* after *of*, p. 44. l. 20.

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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which are arranged in a columnar fashion. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are written in a more formal, printed style. The list is organized into two columns, with the names on the left and the addresses on the right. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are written in a more formal, printed style. The list is organized into two columns, with the names on the left and the addresses on the right.

This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a slightly textured appearance with some minor discoloration and faint horizontal lines near the top edge. A dark, irregular stain is visible along the bottom edge.

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T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**I**T was not without some Reluctancy that I determin'd with myself to commit my Thoughts upon the following Subject, to the Public. I'm sensible a new Author is like a strange Bird, stray'd from his Company ; and consequently not only liable to be peck'd at by the whole Flight of Criticks, but expos'd to their most exquisite Cruelties, rather than Wit or Judgment. Indeed the first Adventures of this kind will receive Advan-

*To the Reader.*

tages from few, even among the Learned Order; since the softest, the gravest Censures are, *That the World is already too full of Books, that rather serve to distract our Thoughts, than inform our Judgments, or improve our Knowledge: That the Press is the Parent of more Impertinences, or crude and empty Notions than useful Truths; and consequently, serve to detain an unadvised Reader upon the Surface, whilst a few, well-chosen Authors, would let him into the Marrow and Quintessence of Learning.* These are indeed unquestionable Truths; and perhaps this Adventure may serve to confirm 'em. But this is not all; for it's observable some Men of Figure and Station, on every turn, discover their Aversions by  
their

their Wishes : They could heartily wish that the present Disputes or Controversies might fall, having no Prospect of any good Effects or Advantages by 'em. I must confess these are Admonitions that should be attended to with Caution, to prevent any Man from being over-hasty in Commencing Author. But yet if we consider the Industry, Insolence, and Boldness of our Adversaries, the open Attacks of some Authors, and the *Artificial Insinuations* of Others ; And in a word, the united Zeal of these Persons to Unhinge and Demolish, without Proposing the least Model to succeed their Ruins ; I can see no reason why those that are Advocates for Truth, and Guardians of an Established Church, should suffer Controversie to fall,

by allowing them to empty their Gall and Filth without Opposition or Controul. It's very certain, that the Notions, now so current and industriously propagated, are the whole Stock or Cargo of Infidelity and Irreligion, of Error, Prejudice, or Disgust, that have been hatched and nursed in private for a whole Age together, and are now vented by the Liberty of the Press; and therefore those that discountenance the Assailment of such pernicious Adversaries seem to establish a new and unheard of Indulgence, which no one, but Criminals, must have the least Benefit of. It's well known, the Conceits of Error, and Boldness of Irreligion are such, That the most crude and frothy Performance, not replied

plied to, must pass for *Unanswerable*. And this gives Credit and Authority to the Industry of an Adversary in propagating his Notions; and by this means, the weakest and most uncouth Suggestions are by tract of Time rivetted in an injudicious Reader, when an early Reply had caused 'em to be rejected with Scorn and Contempt. From these Considerations, the Labours and Endeavours of the Members of our Church, may be sufficiently vindicated; and, I hope, in some measure lay a Foundation for an Apology to my present Undertaking.

I have here endeavoured to represent the *Foundation and Measures* of *Natural Religion*; being an Expedient not only to induce a Sense of Religion, but

to prepare the Mind for an Assent to Revealed Religion, the Complement and Perfection of it. I'm sensible there are several eminent Hands have been engaged on the Subject; but having few of the prevailing Principles of this Age to contend with, they have not fallen in with my main Design, which *was to calculate a Scheme of Natural Religion in Opposition to 'em.*

I thought myself obliged to Animadvert on some Authors, not only where they seem to overturn the fundamantal Principles of Morality, but where they have advanced Arguments or Insinuations that carry a manifest Tendency that way. This Design, I presume, will easily obtain a favourable Construction;



tion; since 'tis well known,  
That an artificial Insinuation,  
or a pernicious Argument ad-  
vanced by a Side-wind, carries  
a more fatal Influence than bold  
and peremptory Positions and  
Assertions. I must confess, the  
*Author of the Essay of Humane  
Understanding*, discovers such a  
*reserved* Way of Writing in all  
his Performances, that, I'm per-  
swaded, he *Designs* more than he  
as yet thinks it seasonable to *Ex-  
press*: And therefore I have used  
him with more Freedom, to ob-  
lige him to place some Asserti-  
ons in a better Light, and express  
his *Meaning* more fully, if not  
his *Intentions*. I have differed in  
my Opinion from two excel-  
lent Discourses; \* but, I hope,  
my Reader will find nothing but  
a Difference in Opinion, deter-  
mined

\* *Confe-  
rence with  
a Theist,  
Part 2.  
The Cer-  
tainty and  
Necessity of  
Religion in  
General.*

mined by a Thread of Argument. Besides, 'tis in Matters that do not affect the main Design of either of the Discourses, that stand firm and unshaken, established upon the clearest Arguments and Conclusions. Thus much I thought myself obliged to Remark; because I never intended to Detract from the Character these Authors have justly merited, or lessen the Reputation or Esteem of such useful Performances.

And now give me leave to conclude with a few Periods, with reference to myself and the following Discourse: I have here delivered my Thoughts form'd in the midst of a great many Avocations. I have acted with all imaginable Sincerity in the pursuit of Truth, and resigned

up

up my Judgment to nothing but that Light, or those Notices which were gained by the *fairest* and most *direct Methods* of Information. I'm as yet persuaded I have represented every thing according to the precise Lines of Truth ; but if I have any where miscarried, I can safely declare 'tis without *Design*, as much as without *Prejudice* against any I have opposed. My great Aim was not only to recover discarded Notions, but a Sense of Religion ; by establishing it upon its true Foundations ; not only to silence Infidelity, but to remove that Scepticism, those Doubts and Hesitations that prevail concerning the most important Points of Natural Religion. But these are Effects too great to be accomplished

complished without the Concurrency of Heavenly Influences. We may Wish and Pray for 'em, but we must commit the Success of 'em to the FATHER of Grace and Mercy. There must be some more than ordinary Effusions of Grace to engage Men in the Use and Exercise of those Means, which God has established for the Discovery of the Divine Will; something to take off the Contempt of those Ordinances which God has appointed for the Attainment of this End; something that will Correct those unjust, but prevailing Prejudices, against an *Order of Men, established by God in his Church*; whereby they are rendred as despicable for want of Honesty as Sense. This is the Work  
of

of Heaven. God is able as well as faithful to accomplish it in his own good time.

If the following Papers fall into the Hands of Men of these Sentiments, I can assure them they'll find nothing of the Imaginary Arts or Mystery of Priestcraft, nothing of any designing Leader, nothing peculiar to the many Guardians of Creeds and Profitable Inventions, so often hinted by the late Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity. But if any thing offers itself, that cannot well be digested, I shall freely embrace a fair and pertinent Answer, and endeavour to make such Returns as, I hope, may, at last, beget full Conviction on both sides.

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T H E



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T H E  
INTRODUCTION,  
Concerning the  
Necessity of REVELATION.

**I**T may perhaps seem a very improper Entertainment to the Christian World, to establish a Line of Duty from the Records of the Book of Nature, when we enjoy a more *sure Word of Prophecy, or Form of sound Doctrine, which is able to make us wise unto Salvation,* or to delineate the Features of Moral Good and Evil, when *Life and Immortality are brought to light through the Gospel;* or, in a word, to dwell on the *Infant-principles of Religion,* when we may *go on unto Perfection.* But certainly the Spirit and Temper peculiar to the Age we live in, is abundantly sufficient to suggest an Apology: Are we not professedly Attack'd as to the Truth and Authority of Revelation, and the Whole of Religion resolved into a Set of Moral

Rules

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Rules and Maxims? And tho' others as yet cannot Discard all Revealed Truths; yet they act as if they were Advocates for the Cause; whilst they allow no other Rise, or Original to Moral Rules and Maxims, than *Custom, Education* and a few unaccountable *Traditions*. These (are Mens Proceedings which) seem to be embarked in the same Design, *viz.* The Subversion of all Religion. Our holy Religion is by this means stript of its most convincing Arguments for its Truth and Divinity, its Intrinsic Goodness and Purity; by an Appeal to the Precepts of Natural Religion. The Believer must grant, That if *Custom, Education* and an unaccountable *Tradition* give Birth to all the prevailing Principles of Morality, the Argument of the Intrinsic Purity of any Religious Precepts will fall to the ground: and when the *Deist* has beat him from this Fortress, he'll easily perswade him that all the rest is *Cheat* and *Imposture*. The Believer having then thus far resigned his Notions of Morality, will now come into Play, and do an equal Piece of Service to the *Deist* and himself too, by making both Converts to *Atheism* and *Irreligion*: For when the Morality and Religion

on

## The Introduction.

on of Mankind is wholly to be resolved into *Custom, Education*, and the *Modes* and *Habits* of Ancestors, and Contradictions in Principles of Morality produced as a Confirmation of the Notion, what can more effectually subvert the eternal Distinctions of Good and Evil, and as a Consequent of it introduce and establish a *Law of Fashion*, as the only Measure, and Standard of Vertue? I will not positively fix these Designs on all those that have espoused the Notion: It's sufficient to my present Business that it carries a manifest Tendency towards the Promotion of 'em, or that it gives a Foundation to the *Impious* and *Prophane* to establish their lewd Schemes of Infidelity.

It cannot therefore be unseasonable, to assert the *Divine Authority*, and *Original* of Natural Religion; and that too not only by way of Vindication of such an important Truth, but as it serves the Cause of Christianity against the Attempts of *Deists* and *Unbelievers*. These are Conclusions so natural and obvious, that I'm perswaded the natural Tendency of the Doctrin, with an *undisturbed Toleration*, will too fatally demonstrate the Power and Efficacy of 'em.

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But yet, whilst we endeavour to obviate one growing Error, it ought to be consider'd, whether such Endeavours do not prepare the way for introducing, and confirming another more dangerously pernicious: For if God has establish'd a Law of Nature, antecedent to Revelation, as an indispensable Rule of Duty, and Action to Mankind, and enabled 'em to discover and embrace it as such; the *Drist* will conclude there can be no Necessity for a *Revealed Religion*; and consequently resolve it into a *Contrivance* of some *Designing Men*, an *Artificial System* of certain *Creed-makers*, (as a late *Author* has Characteriz'd a certain Order of Men) to secure an Empire, as well as Maintenance from the silly Populace. I must confess this is the great *Goliath*, the Champion-argument which Infidelity has recourse to, to assail the Faith of the Living God, *once delivered to the Saints*. But certainly this is a lewd Attempt, for Men to think to Demonstrate against a plain Matter of Fact, by putting their Adversaries upon demonstrating the Necessity of such a Matter of Fact. This is to advance our own shallow Understandings above the Sphere of Infinite Wisdom, and Reason, since we are resolved not only  
to



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to pronounce the most solemn Transactions of Providence useless, but reject the Truth and Certainty of 'em, because a bias'd Judgment is resolved not to account for the Ends and Designs of 'em. But certainly, the Reasons and Necessity of things are sufficiently asserted, by resolving 'em into the Decrees and Proceedings of infinite Wisdom. If Revealed Religion is not from God, the Unbeliever has an easier Task to detect the Forgery. If the Believer contends for a Divine Original, why should it not be tryed upon its proper Evidence? I mean as all matters of Fact are. But I am perswaded the Apprehensions of a certain Defeat, oblige the Infidel to decline this Challenge: For it's well known, the most avow'd Enemies to Revelation, even *Julian* himself, could never dispute the Evidences of Christian Truth; I mean the Performance of Miracles. However, since the modern Unbeliever seems to plume himself in the Successes of this Argument, I shall for once allow the Objection, and venture the whole Merits of the Cause in demonstrating the Expediency and Necessity of Divine Revelation.

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§. 1<sup>st</sup>. Now, in order to this, it will be requisite to make a short Survey of the *Original State and Condition* of Mankind, both before and after the *Fall*; for by this means we may make a more exact Estimate of the Capacities, and Attainments of Mankind in matters of Knowledge, as well as Practice.

It will readily be granted, That as God originally established a Line of Duty in the very Frame of our Natures, so He undoubtedly created us with Faculties, to enable us to discern, or comprehend every Part, or Branch of it. It's true, Laws of Nature were never presented to the View of the Mind, by an Angelic sort of Intuition, without Ideas passing thro' the Animal part: But yet Reason will oblige us to conclude, That the *Glory of an Almighty Creator*, and the *Express Image of his Person*, came forth of his Hands pure and spotless: All his Powers, Faculties and Appetites, were correct and regular: Those native Passions and Propensions, which are now too often the Parents of Disorder and Confusion, were, no doubt, originally constant Attendants, and faithful Handmaids to the Powers of Reason: That Love and Zeal, that Complacency.

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placency and Delight, which are now fatally chain'd to sensual Enjoyments, were originally engaged and devoted to the Entertainments, and Exercises of a spiritual, rational Mind. Our chiefest Flights of Zeal and Love, were, no doubt, directed on the Improvement of Knowledge, and the Disquisition of Truth. And certainly here's a solid Foundation for Truth: For here are not only native Passions and Propensions, which serve as Springs to engage the Mind in the closest Researches after Truth; but the whole Frame of the animal Part, being thus correct, the Images of Things must needs be presented to the View of the Mind in their native Shapes, and Proportions, without the least Paint or Disguise; and consequently the Mind could act and display herself in the largest Train of Deductions, without the least Trippings, or Miscarriages. So that Man, in his Original Frame, was enabled to lay in a wonderful Stock of substantial Knowledge, and make a clear Discovery of the full Line of Duty.

But besides, it's highly consonant to Reason to imagin, as the Great Creator of the World had adorned his *Image* and *Representative* with all desirable Perfections,

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ctions, so he had not only entitled, but invested him with special Favours and Blessings, as well Spiritual, as Temporal; For we must not suppose, that the placing him in *Paradise*, only implies an actual Fruition of the whole Circle of Temporal Felicities; but the Dispensation of such Spiritual Blessings, and Favours, as are suitable to Human Nature, whilst it rested on this side Heaven, and was not immediately instated in the *Beatific Vision*. Whilst Man retained his primitive Innocence, he was no doubt a very choice Favourite in the Eyes of his Maker, and consequently we must conclude that he enjoyed constant Communications, and Intercourses with him. For *Paradise* may justly be presumed to be a kind of Terrestrial State of Vision; and therefore God no doubt discovered himself in frequent Adumbrations of his Divine Presence, and vouchsafed several special Revelations, and his Divine Succours.

These may perhaps be thought unnecessary Dispensations in a State of unspotted Innocence and Integrity. But, certainly, tho' Man in his original Frame was endued with a Sufficiency of Power to Decypher the Line of Duty, as well

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as Propensions, and Dispositions to observe, and walk up to it; yet such gracious Communications were in some measure necessary, to maintain a deep Sense of the Majesty, and Authority of our Maker, and consequently a deep Sense of Duty, and Obedience; to maintain a deep Sense of the Goodness and Purity of God, and consequently possess the Mind with an incessant Desire to act in Conformity to his most sacred Will.

Again, necessary they were to arm those native Powers, and Propensions with double Force and Activity; to unite and fix 'em on their proper Object, the Glory and Perfections of their Maker, the Pursuit of Truth and Divine Knowledge; and consequently to engage a Perseverance in the Line of Duty, with the utmost Constancy and Resolution.

These were, nodoubt, the surprizing Felicities of *Paradise*. And they are such, as almost placed him out of the possibility of a Miscarriage, had he not, in some unguarded Minute, fell in with a subtle indefatigable Impostor. For without some such Misfortune he could not have failed in retaining a perpetual Sense

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Sense of Duty and Obedience, and persevering in it, any more than in a discovery of the full Line of Duty.

§. 2. But now Experience, as well as Reason, too fatally assure us, there's a powerful, and almost irresistible Bias on the *Animal Part*, that bears an older Date than *Custom* or *Education* can pretend to give; a Bias that discovers itself in the first Efforts of Infancy; a Bias that can never be perfectly regulated, or corrected even by the most exquisite Arts of Education: When the Powers of Nature seem to exist as it were *in fieri*, folded up in Impotency and Imperfection, and consequently (one would think) liable to be molded at Pleasure; yet we find this Bias endu'd, as it were, with a Gygantick Strength, able to resist the most powerful Antidotes, obstinate under Commands, and untractable under Counsels or Persuasives. In a word, it has introduced an internal Rupture in the whole Frame of Man, renders him a kind of unnatural Production, acted by two opposite Principles, contending for two different Ends and Interests, and agreeable to the sacred Language, it has raised an intestine and eternal War,  
for

## The Introduction.

for its a Law in our Members warring a-  
gainst the Law of our Mind, Rom. 7. 23. 7

So that Man is certainly sunk in his ori-  
ginal Frame, and lapsed into a State of  
Corruption and Degeneracy: This is  
Truth so clear, and unquestionable, that  
the most discerning Heathens have gi-  
ven Testimony to the Substance of it:  
They all found it wove in with their Na-  
tures, and discovering itself, not only in  
inward Motions, and Propensions, but  
mixing itself in their most exalted Acti-  
ons. It's true, they were perplexed in  
accounting for its Original, yet they all  
saw it in its Effects and Consequences.

Their Opinions were various; however,  
I shall mention the chief of 'em: *Plutarch*  
charges the *Stoicks* with ascribing Evil as  
well as Good to God's Providence, and  
arraigns it as the height of Absurdities.

[See his Tract *Adversus Stoicos*,] \* Πρῶτον ἡ P. 1069i

μὴ ἐν τῇ κακίᾳ τρυφῆσαι καὶ ἐν τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ πρόνοιᾳ, Ed. Par. 1624

πᾶσι καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπορίᾳ ἡμετέροις; ἢ ὅ μᾶλλον ἀγα-

θῶν ἢ κακῶν ἀπορίᾳ ἀπορίᾳ; ὡς ἂν εἰς τι θεῶς ἐχθρὸν

ἢ κακίᾳ ἢ θεῶν. If this were true, why should

they be more concerned to dispense Good ra-

ther than Evil; or how is it possible that

Evil should be hateful to 'em? This in-

deed was an Opinion extremely gross,

and consequently rejected by the most

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discerning Sages. However *Gellius*, pursuant to this, delivers it as the Opinion of *Chrysippus*: [This is the very Opinion which *Plutarch* ingeniously exposes, 16.] That Vice sprang from Vertue, καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀρετῆς. *Dum virtus hominibus per consilium natura gignitur, vitia ibidem per affectum contraria nata sunt.* But the most general Opinion was, That Good and Evil proceeded from two distinct Principles. Hence *Plutarch* gives it as a most ancient Tradition, recited by Divines, and Law-givers, and transmitted to Poets and Philosophers; τῆς ἀρχαίας ἀπομνημονεύσεως ἧς ἀρχὴν ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἔχοντες, whose Authority is not to be traced: That there was not one only Supream Governing Principle, ἓν ἄριστον ὃ καθ' ἑαυτὸν καὶ καθ' ἑμπεδωμένον; And from the Eternal Mixture of Good and Evil, as well as the Imperfection and Allay of Good, concludes, We are acted by two contrary Principles, the one conducting, or tolling us on, in a true and direct Path, and the other haling us back again, τῶν μὲν ἐστὶν τὸ διέξω καὶ κατ' ἐπίνοιαν ὁρᾶν, καὶ τῶν δ' ἐμπαῖον ἀγνοῦν καὶ ἀνακλῆναι. Nay, he further argues, If nothing can exist without a Cause, and Good cannot be the Cause of Evil, there must be a peculiar Principle of Evil, as well as Good, αἱ δὲ γινώσκουσιν ἰδίαν ἔχειν ἀρχὴν καὶ ἑαυτὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ ἀλλοτρίαν.



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καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἔχον. De Iside & Osyride.  
Page 369.

But further, not to dwell too long upon Authorities, it's well known, it was an ancient Doctrine among the Heathens, to ascribe the Origine of Evil, to certain malevolent Spirits, called *Dæmons*, or *Manes*; that could exercise a Power over the Minds, as well as Bodies of Men, and dispose and incline them to evil Actions. *Plutarch*, in this very Treatise, gives a full Account of the Notion, and the Nature of 'em; nay, he delivers it as the Doctrine of *Plato*, *Pythagoras*, *Zenocrates*, and *Chrysippus*, following that of the *Ancient Divines*, Ἐπομαρτυρεῖ τὴν πολλὰν διολόγην. Ib. p. 360. The Opinion of *Zenocrates* is very remarkable, who attributes Obsceneness, Irreligion and other Evils to certain powerful malevolent Spirits, inhabiting the Region of the Air, that take Delight in such Things, εἶναι φύσιν ἐς τὴν αἰὲρ ἔχοντι μεγάλους μὲν καὶ ἰσχυροὺς, ἀσεβήτους δὲ καὶ σκυθρωποὺς, αἱ χαίρουσι τοῖς κακίοις. It's well known, the *Romans* constantly ascribed the Regimen of their Actions, to their proper *Genius*, assigning two to every particular Person. These did not only attend 'em from their Birth, and suggest Things to the Mind,

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but contributed to the forming their very Constitutions. Indeed, it's highly probable, these were Traditions transmitted from the *Greeks* to the *Romans*, and from the *Egyptians* to the *Greeks*, and all founded in the History of the Fall of Man. And truly, *Hierocles*, agreeably to his other Divine Flights, describes the Degeneracy of Mankind in such a lively manner, as if he had taken it from the revealed Canon. In the first place, he describes Man in his Original Composition, to be *Pure* and *Uncorrupt*, in both Parts of him, and the express Image of his Maker. Ἐστὶ γὰρ πᾶς μὲν ὁ λογικὸς δυνάμει καὶ τῷ συμπνευσθῆναι αὐτῷ ἀφ' ἀρχῆς σωματικῶς, ἔχον ὅλα τὰ θειόεργα θεῶ. [*Hier. Comment. in Pythag. Carm. p. 17. Ed. Lond. 1673.*]

After this, in his Comment on the Nature and Frame of Man, with respect to the Rise, or Origine, of Good and Evil, he represents, with what a powerful Impulse we are carried into Evil, and pronounces it to be the Effect of a wilful Apostasie and Revolt from God, and his Society : Even a Society which we once enjoyed in pure Light, Ἐν αὐτῇ καθαρῇ ; whereby an invincible Propension to the Things of this World is contracted. He confirms the Notion by the

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the Doctrine of *Plato*, and *Empedocles*: The whole Discourse is excellent, from Page 252, to p. 272. The Substance of it is collected by the *Learned Bishop of Worcester*, and applied to the present Argument, with exquisite Force and Accuracy; and therefore supercedes the necessity of another Citation. [See *Orig. Sac. Lib. 3. Cap. 3.*]

From all this, it's indisputably evident, the Learned Heathen World were highly sensible of a State of Degeneracy; and tho' the greatest part were in the Dark as to its Rise or Original, yet some of the most Curious had preserved something of the Footsteps of it: However, they were all highly sensible of its dismal Effects and Mischiefs.

But now Revealed Religion has abundantly unfolded this Mystery, by assuring us, that a Native Depravity was contracted thro' the Transgression of our *First Parents*. I know the *Deist*, *Socinian*, and the *Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, look upon this Doctrine to be a piece of *Cant*, or *Jargon*: formed by the *Priests*, those wary Guardians of their own *Creeds*, and profitable *Inventions*, as this *Author* has it. But as for the *Deist*, the general Sense of Man-

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kind,

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kind, and the Doctrines of Philosophers, are considerable Arguments to render the reveal'd Accounts of it highly probable : And therefore, unless he were able to disprove the Truth, and Authority, of Revelation, on the same Foot that we overturn any other forged History, I'm perswaded unbiass'd Reason will pronounce his Notions, impudent Calumnies, or Detractions. As for the Author<sup>s</sup> of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, endeavouring to undermine the Corruption of Human Nature upon *Adam's* Transgression, (*See p. 6.*) he might have consider'd, that it was always the prevailing Doctrine of the Christian Church. That it is made an Article of the Establish'd Church of *England*; of which he would perswade the World he's a sound and Orthodox Member, and ~~to~~ which Article he has actually submitted. And tho' *the Word of God* has no where in express Terms told us that this natural Depravity is the Seeds of *Adam's* Transgression, yet there are sufficient Authorities of Scripture, whence we may infer it, by a clear and convincing Consequence. We can prove, that the Descendents of *Adam* were undoubtedly affected in the same manner with that of their Parent, and

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and both by a *Spiritual* as well as a *Temporal* Death; I mean such a Death, at least, as in the Language of *Scripture* implies a disabling of the Faculties of the Mind, as well as a Dissolution of the *Animal* and *Spiritual* Principles. In a word, it may fairly be inferred, that, that carnal Principles, that *prevails in the whole Off-spring of Adam*, whereby we are, as it were, sold under Sin, or that reigning Law in our Members, that brings us into Captivity to the Law of Sin, so that when we would do Good, Evil is present with us; is the Effect of Adam's Transgression. The Body of this Death was undoubtedly derived thorough his Loins, on all his Descendents; and the Seeds and Principles of a higher Death were certainly transmitted, even tho' eternal Death were not formally imputed by making him the Representative of Mankind, since these Seeds and Principles, in the Language of the Apostle, would at least work in our Members to bring forth Fruit unto Death, Rom, 7. v. 5.

I know the great Artifice, to which our Adversaries have recourse, to blast the Credit of this Doctrine, is, either to oppose it to the Justice of God, or Ha-

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range upon the Impossibilities of it : Because God has not clearly revealed, and we cannot fully comprehend how such a Depravity is contracted, much less propagated. But, certainly, it was never the Business, or Design of Revelation, to communicate the Manner of the Divine Transactions, no more than to Authorize us to reject 'em, *because we cannot comprehend the manner of 'em.* It was never a Rule of Revelation, to make our own Faculties of Perception, in comprehending the Nature of Things, or in reconciling 'em to the scanty Notions we have conceived of another Revealed Truth, the Standard, Test or Measure of Faith. And therefore, to reject the clearest Evidence of Original Corruption, because we cannot comprehend how 'tis contracted, or because the Notions of Infinite Justice, tho' formed by our selves (as we think) must suffer by it, is Base, and Unwarrantable. But however, that our Adversaries may want the Advantage of this Presence, I mean, that Original Corruption can no way be accounted for, I shall attempt something to demonstrate how it may be *Contracted, and Transmitted.*

And

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And first, This will easily be accounted for, from the *Nature of Original Corruption*: It's already concluded, That Original Corruption consists in the Exorbitance of the Animal Part, or acts as a *Law in our Members, warring against the Law of our Minds*, contending for an opposite Interest to the Laws of right Reason, or the true Interests of Human Nature. Now, that this Irregularity may be the Effect of *Adam's Transgression*, there are two or three Circumstances that render it more highly probable:

For first, Tho' the Violation of a positive Law, contains but a simple Act of his Obedience, yet it certainly implies a horrid Violence committed upon all the Powers of Human Nature: When the Tempter displayed his Wiles, and formed his deluding Perswasives, it certainly threw the unwary Offender into the greatest Agonies and Convulsions: It must raise those convincing Apprehensions of the Majesty and Authority of God; it must suppress the Dread of Divine Punishments; it must break thro' all the Guards, and Powers of Conscience, and Fences of Duty; it must alienate the whole Frame of the Soul, take

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off those Desires, and Propensions, that engaged us in the Observance of God's Commands, and those Satisfactions that result from the Observance of 'em. In a word, it must extinguish all the Powers of Divine Love, suppress those Flights of Zeal in exercising the Mind, and Thoughts in Divine Contemplations, the Glories and Perfections of our Maker; and in pursuing such Things as will render us remarkably like him: So that this Grand Act of Disobedience, must contain a Complication of impious Debates and Resolutions, before it was committed: For certainly the Powers of Nature being so exquisitely fitted for an Obediential Temper, and the Soul so deeply possessed with a Sense of the uninterrupted Favours and Bounties of God, flowing from his frequent Intercourses, and Communications; the Devil must play his Temptations a considerable time, before he could promise himself success. The Passions and Propensions of Human Nature, must not only be taken off from serving their great Creator, but turned a quite contrary way; they must be strongly disposed in gratifying the *Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and Pride of Life.* And now, who

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who cannot discern the Growth, or Production, of carnal Exorbitances, and consequently the Establishment of Original Corruption? It's concluded, that this single Act of Disobedience, was carried on by a Complication of evil Principles; inasmuch, that it seems to have the same Foundation, that in other Cases serves to establish a confirmed Habit; and consequently, it ~~must~~ have the same Efficacy in fixing vicious Propensions, that is attributed to vicious Habits. But now the Contagion of vicious Actions is too fatally confirmed by Experience and Observation, to be disputed in Theory; every Act prepares the way for a Repetition; but a confirmed Habit lays a Bias like a Second Nature; a Bias, that in the Sacred Language, is as incapable of being remov'd, as the most subtle Productions of Nature: *Can the Aethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots?* It's manifest therefore, that the Disobedience of our first Parent, introduced an *Internal Corruption*, by way of Natural Efficacy, not by way of *Divine Punishment*.

But further, this cannot be well disputed, if we take in two other considerable Circumstances that attended the *Fall*; which

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which in reality were proper Punishments ; I mean a total Exclusion from *Paradise*, and consequently from the special Intercourses of the Divine Presence ; and the Curse that fell on the Products of Nature ; we must conclude, that the Defection of our first Parents, introduced a perpetual, and almost invincible Corruption.

And first, If we ~~all~~ assert, what with good Reason has been already evinced, that those sensible Adumbrations of the Divine Presence, as well as frequent Intercourses with our Maker, were needful, to preserve a Sense of Duty, as well as Perseverance in it ; How fatally must the Exclusion from the Divine Presence expose our first Parents to the Dominion of those Lusts, which their Disobedience had newly engendred ? But then, when they are not only *driven from the Presence of the Lord*, but condemned to *eat their Bread in the Sweat of their Brows*, and converse with little, but Thorns and Brambles, and the tedious Methods of Husbandry, how strangely must their Mind and Thoughts be chain'd to Earth, and the insolent Demands of the Animal Appetite ? So that, when all these things are fairly laid together, I can attribute

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nothing less to the Disobedience of our first Parents, than what the Word of God ascribes to a State of Nature, to wit, *the Lustings of the Flesh against the Spirit, and the Law of the Members warring against the Law of the Mind, and bringing 'em into Captivity unto the Law of Sin and Death.* If the Propagation of such a fatal Contagion cannot well be accounted for in the Descendants of our first Parents, I'm abundantly convinced it must unavoidably establish itself in the Frame of their Constitutions. But truly, there's no Colour of Reason offers itself, why such a powerful Bias, or Contagion, unless suspended by an overruling Power, should not be transmitted by the common Laws of Generation.

Indeed, when we consider how much our Animal Appetites, and Propensions that are engendred by Habit, depend on the Disposition of the Blood, and Animal Spirits, insomuch that they often new Model the Natural Constitution; I cannot conceive, why a general Contagion of this Nature may not be propagated, as well as particular Features, Complexions, or Constitutions? I will readily grant, that some peculiar Turns in Nature, may alter the Frame of particular

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cular Constitutions, and dispose a Person to some peculiar Vices more powerfully than others; but I'm perswaded, a change can never be effected by any, but one that has the Sovereign Disposal of the Powers of Nature, *that weigheth the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance*, can prevent all vicious Propensions from being transmitted from the Parent, on their proper Off-spring.

And thus, I hope, I have in some measure given a *Rationale* of an Original Corruption, that represents an *unavoidable necessity of sinning and provoking God in all our Actions*. (See *Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 5.) And yet it is consistent with the infinite Justice of God. I have enlarged more fully on the Subject, because it will lay a Foundation to represent the *Expediency*, or *Necessity* of Revelation.

§ 3. And first, Having already concluded, that Man, in his present State and Condition, is acted by two opposite Principles, involved in two opposite Interests, and each contending for Government, and Dominion; it may easily be discerned how our Attainments in Knowledge are affected; whereby

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Revelation will become highly necessary.

Now, certainly, the Re-searches of Reason, in such a divided State, can never be elaborate, and correct : For first, it cannot be denied, but the Avenues of Reason, take their Rise from the *Animal* Part ; and consequently, all the Materials of Reason must make their passage this way. Nay, further, the *Animal* Appetites, and Passions, are the immediate Springs, and Movers of Reason ; and therefore, since it is concluded that the Bias of the Animal Part is so formidably strong and powerful, we cannot imagine, but Matters will be so ordered as to prevent any considerable Disquisitions. For by this means the Ideas of things will not only be often disguised, and presented in a false Light, or Dress, but the Importunities of the Carnal Part will not suffer the Mind to dwell upon any Object, that does not comport with its Interest ; they will not suffer her to place it in the Scales, and try its Worth and Value, by any solid Debates and Counsels ; and consequently, Miscarriages will arise, for want of due Application, and Attention of Mind,

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Now certainly, since this is the true State of Things, we must place the Acquest of Knowledge under the greatest Difficulties: It will not only embarrass and perplex every Thought and Working of the Mind, but cut short the Scheme of all our Enquiries; and therefore tho' the Fundamental Lines of Duty may discover themselves to Human View, or Perception, we cannot think to launch forth into the Deep, and make a certain Discovery of those consequential Duties, that are absolutely necessary to the Conduct of Human Life. The common Necessities of Human Nature, will introduce the Knowledge of the principal Lineaments, and Proportions of Duty; but we can never descend to a Discovery of some other considerable Parts, and Circumstances, that make up the Complement of Duty. In a word, frequent Retirements, and solemn Exercitations of Thinking may engage such an application of Mind, as will enable her to work off the substantial Parts of the Line of Duty; but without these Arts and Methods, and without Time, and Leisure, a Man may spin out a thoughtless Life; or, at least, the Mind will be weighed down by *Animal Propensions*,

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sions, and employ it self in nothing but laying in *Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts of it.*

And, now can any Man pronounce Revelation unnecessary? What, tho' Providence has not yet left the World or rather the World reduced it self to such dismal Circumstances, but that with close Researches, and unwearied Vigilance, they may calculate the main Lines of Duty; yet it cannot be deny'd, but we carry a kind of *Ignis fatuus* within, that will be apt to lead a great part of Mankind into Bogs, and a thousand Miscarriages; and therefore we cannot think it unnecessary to be secured from such fatal Hazards, and Difficulties by having a Digest of Laws laid before us, that remain as an unquestionable Standard of Duty. What tho' the common Exigencies and Necessities of Nature, the Frame and Condition of our Beings, by the Light of natural Reason will direct us to the Ground-work of Morality and natural Religion, it can be no Argument, that the Light of natural Reason can enable us to raise the Superstructure; that is, either to accommodate those Laws we can discover, to the Cases and Instances of humane Life, so  
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as to reduce 'em to Practice ; at least so as to answer the true Ends and Intentions of Living ; or to discover other Laws that are the Consequences of prime Laws of Nature, and indispensably necessary to the Conduct of Humane Life, to the disposing us for that State of Happiness, for which God has originally design'd us, much less to render our Services truly acceptable to God. Certainly if we reflect on those inextricable Clogs, Obstructions and Encumbrances, wherewith corrupted Nature appears to be encompassed ; we must pronounce it impossible, that the Powers of natural Reason should carry us thus far : It's certain, tho' natural Reason may present most of the Fundamental Laws of Nature in a rough Draught ; yet nothing but Revelation is able to give 'em their finishing Strokes, and their proper Graces and Perfections, and display 'em in their Consequences Appendages and Deductions ; I mean such as are absolutely necessary to the Ends and Purposes of living well, and attaining to a State of Happiness : And therefore if natural Reason cannot pretend to furnish us in these Cases, she must subscribe to the Necessity of Revelation.

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Indeed, I am persuaded natural Reason, by a constant Habit of Thinking, and a solemn Attention and Application of Mind, may make very lucky Conjectures, very ample Discoveries, at least upon probable Evidences, and Convictions in very important Truths: But God knows, as the Frame of Man now stands, we must attribute such mighty Performances to a *Work* of Time, to the Labours, and Observations of Ages; they can only be the Product of a few working Brains, that by a peculiar Genius have sequestered themselves from secular Affairs, and consecrated their Thoughts to the Observations of Humane Nature; and yet the Whole at last amounts no higher than a few general Maxims, or Positions formed from a happy Conjunction of their own Thoughts, and the Observations of their Ancestors; and these often clash and interfere with those of their Brethren, and consequently can carry no higher Authority or Character than *Learned Conjectures*: And now since Reason and Experience demonstrate, as well as dictate the Truth of these things, a revealed *Canon* seems to be absolutely necessary for the Conduct of Man-

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kind, or the Attainment of that Happiness, which the Light of natural Reason in a State of Innocency, would have otherwise secured. A Revealed Canon was necessary, to silence the immortal Disputes of the Learned, as well as inform the Illiterate, at an easy Expence of Time and Thought. A Revealed Canon was necessary to give the most elaborate Discoveries of Reason, the Authority of Laws, in as much as it was necessary they should be ushered into the World with the highest Credentials of Divinity, and established upon competent and express Rewards and Punishments.

But to conclude this Argument, Notwithstanding the utmost Attainments of Human Reason, I can see nothing to supersede the Necessity of Revelation, but what will as effectually set aside the Necessity of Human Laws, and Civil Government. It's certain, That Laws of Nature, discoverable by natural Reason, answer the general Ends and Intentions of Civil Government, and describe the great Lines of Right and Wrong, Justice and Equity; they assert the Rights of Property, as well as the Obligations of private Compacts:

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If therefore these general Notices be not sufficient for the Conduct of Human Life, even in secular Affairs; we cannot imagine, that the Discoveries of Natural Reason should reach the whole Line of Duty, with respect to God, Ourselves, and Neighbour. In a word, since after the highest Pretences to a natural Light, it was necessary to constitute Civil Governments, and entrust Men of Thought and Parts to work off a Body of Laws, for the Conduct of Mankind in temporary Concerns, by the nicest Consults, Debates, and Observations; how much more necessary is it to receive a Digest of Laws from an Infalible, and Unerring Hand to secure an Eternal, as well as Temporal Happiness?

Thus far we have advanc'd the Necessity of Revelation, in order to the Discovery of the Line of Duty; but there is something more behind to improve the Argument: For it's certain, we have hitherto represented the fairest Part of the Landskip of Human Nature; I mean as it lies in a degenerate State: It's certain, it is not only clog'd with those native Encumbrances, and

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Propensions derived from the Loins of our Ancestors, that weigh down the Activity of the Mind, but we are all unfortunately brought forth in Impotence; and consequently are forced to suck in the Superstition and Absurdities, as well as Impieties of our Parents, of the present, as well as past Ages. These must unavoidably grow up together with our Reason, and improve with the Strength and Vigour of our Bodies; so that when we arrive to the Use of Reason, we have not only native powerful Propensions, but as violent Prejudices to grapple with.

In the first Age of the World, where Men enjoyed the Instructions of our first Parent, the Laws of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, were clear and legible; the Stream was pure and untainted, when it just issued forth from the Fountain; but by length of Tract, it gathered Filth and Mud; for every Age was a Common-shore, to transmit all its Vices and Irregularities.

This was the case of the old World, as it is of a great part of this, at this day; of miserable *Indians*, as well as hardened *Antediluvians*; the Imaginations of whose Hearts by this means were to do evil continually,

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ually, and their Understandings being past feeling, were incurably darkned.

Now certainly, when Men happen to be born under such an unfortunate Climate, where instead of living, they seem to be buried in an invincible State of Ignorance; how is it possible they can ever be reduced to a Sense of Duty, or act like Men, or Reasoning Beings, till they are enlightned by the convincing Beams of Revelation? Whilst their Minds are enclosed in this State of Egyptian Darknes, no Wonder if in the Sacred Language they should grope or seek after the Lord, if happily they might feel him ought, and find him, tho' he be not far from every one of us; and certainly, if the Case of some poor Wretches in the World was so desperate, that they might easily miss the Discovery of a Law-giver, it's impossible they should form a Body of Laws, as an indispensable Rule of Action. Who can therefore dispute the Necessity of a Revealed Dispensation, when Mankind is reduced to such forlorn and dismal Circumstances, any more than suppress and disown the surprizing Graces, and Mercies of it?

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§. 5. But further, we may demonstrate the Necessity of Revelation from certain *Defects* in Natural Religion, that are only to be supplied by Revelation; and by this means we shall confirm and strengthen the preceding Arguments. And first the Necessity of Revelation discovers it self in the *Notion* and *Worship* of a GOD: It's well known, though the Consideration of our own Frame, and of those things without us, may by the Light of natural Reason induce the Belief of a God; and, at least give us an imperfect Idea of his excellent Nature, yet certainly the latter is not to be attained but by Men of Thought and Observation. The unthinking Vulgar are ready to resemble the *Godhead* by *Gold or Silver, or Stone graven by Art, and Man's Device*. But after the nicest Discoveries, that natural Reason can pretend to, we can no where find the Godhead represented in its true Graces and Perfections, but in the Book of Revelation. Again, tho' Natural Reason must dictate, that God is to be worshipped; yet to calculate the precise Way, and Manner of it, seems to exceed the Sphere of its Activity: To worship God in a spiritual Manner by Prayer and Thanksgiving,

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ving, seems extremely reasonable, because highly consonant to his blessed Nature; but yet had Revelation been silent, Reason, that is so much immersed in Sense, and sensible Objects, would never have carryed us much above the gross, and scandalous Ways, and Rites of Heathen Worship. *The whole World* in these Cases *lay in Ignorance and Superstition*; and therefore the Purity and Honour of God seems to induce a kind of Necessity, or Obligation on him, to make a Reform by a revealed Dispensation: It's his Prerogative to determine what Worship his Creatures shall pay him; and the actual Determination of it, is the Business of Revelation.

Again, The Necessity of Revelation is abundantly expressed in the Enforcements of Divine Laws: For tho' natural Reason might inform us, that Rewards and Punishments are the inseparable Consequents of the Observance, or Violation of Laws; yet it can never pretend to state the Nature, or Measure of 'em; and yet this seems absolutely necessary to a due Enforcement of Laws, to secure an Obedience agreeable to the general Intention of 'em. It's the Prerogative of every Law-gi-

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ver to assign proper Rewards and Punishments; and if the Supreme Law-giver of Mankind has not done it in a State of Nature, it's highly necessary he should do it under a State of Revelation.

Lastly, I would fain know, whether natural Reason can make a complear, and convincing Discovery of the History of the *Creation*, or that of the *Fall*, and the dismal Consequences of it; of the Order of *Spirits*, and particularly of the Malevolence of the *wicked One* and his *Associates*; of the Nature of the *Soul*, and its *Immortality*; and of the Nature and Certainty of a *Future State*: These are certainly Things of the highest Importance in the Affairs of Religion; and tho' natural Reason, and a nice Thread of Thought might advance a great many noble Speculations; yet we find the Learned discouraging of some of 'em, as a kind of happy Presages, rather than establish'd Truths. *Nescio quomodo inhaeret in mentibus quasi Saculorum quoddam Augurium futurorum.* [Sic. Tusc. Quæst. Lib. 1. Tit. 4. p. 350.] And certainly nothing, besides the special Communications of Heaven, could settle such weighty Points of Philosophy: These alone were only able to silence the Eternal Disputes, and Distractions



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Attractions of the Heathen Schools. The World view'd 'em but thro' a Glass darkly; but Revelation presents 'em Face to Face. The World in these Cases was like the Men of Sodom, struck with Blindness, and groping for the Door; the Key of Knowledge. They are the Beams of Christianity, that are only powerful enough at once to melt off the Scales, and convey a full Ray of Light into the Soul: It's a Peculiar of the Christian Institution, to display the Nature, and Certainty of a future, and exceeding Re-compence of Reward, and bring Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel. It's another Peculiar, to present Mankind with a true Landskip of 'emselfes, and the Miseries of their former Condition; to display the indefatigable Attacks of the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that worketh powerfully in the Children of Disobedience, and the true Methods of fencing against him: Are not these Discoveries of the highest Importance? Are they not indispensably necessary to render us Favourites of Heaven, to secure Peace and Safety in this World, and to conduct us to the Regions of Happiness in another? If these things are so, to dispute the Necessity

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cellity of Revelation, is a greater Argument of the Iniquity of our Will, than Judgments, since it is not want of Evidence or Conviction, but the <sup>weight</sup> of Baseness and Ingratitude, that obliges us to reproach and quarrel with our Great Creator for his inestimable Mercies.

§. But further, another Argument of the Necessity of Revelation will arise from the *Mischiefs*, which the *Fall* has brought on Mankind, in reference to *Practice*. Indeed here an Original Corruption does sufficiently signalize it self; here it discovers its Strength and Authority in a very remarkable manner. For it's the general Complaint of Mankind, that the *Animal* Propensions weigh down the Soul to that degree, that she is not able to pursue those Duties which she plainly discovers to be such. The most exalted Heathen Moralists, the most improved Asceticks always confessed their Impotence in Matters of Practice; they freely acknowledged that their Actions fell infinitely short of their Informations, or the Line of Duty. The Orator has long since observ'd, That the wisest Sages among the *Greeks*, as well as *Latins*, could discourse and  
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write upon Virtue after a magnificent Manner, tho' they shamefully miscarried, where it was to be reduced to Practice: *Quibus cum facere non possent, loqui tamen & scribere honeste & magnifice licebat.* [Cic. Orat. pro Coelio, p. 448. Ed. Lond.] So that it was not the Knavery of Priests, in filling the Heads of their People with false Notions of the Deity, and their Worship with foolish Rites; or in excluding Reason from having any thing to do with Religion, that obstructed the Progress of Virtue, as a late Author on every turn has suggested, [See Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 257, 264.] but the Corruptions of Human Nature, that rendered the best Rules and Instructions almost useless. But now, since Mankind seems to be placed under moral Impossibilities of acting pursuant to the Lines of Duty; it's absolutely necessary such Provisions should be made, as might put them into a Condition to bring their Actions in some Measure up to the Line of Duty.

And, certainly, nothing less can secure so great a Work than a written Code, and those Methods Providence has contrived to enforce the Observance of it. By this means their Time and Thoughts will not be engrossed in deep Re-

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Researches after the Line of Duty; and consequently a competent Share of both may be reserved in advancing Arts and Methods to enforce the Practice of it. By this means the World enjoys a standing Order of Men, by *Divine Appointment*, whose Office is not only to preserve the Line of Duty entire and uncorrupt; but to press and inculcate the Observance of it by all the Methods of Persuasion. By this means the Overtures of spiritual Succours are ascertain'd, to facilitate the Practice of Virtue; and certainly, where such unmerited Acts of Grace are conferred, God may well be allowed to publish his own *Canon*, and require a suitable Obedience to it, especially when the doing it is another Act of Grace, and unspeakable Condescension.

§. 7. But to proceed; the most convincing Argument, to represent the Necessity of Revelation, derives from the *Necessity of a Mediator*. It's abundantly concluded, That *the whole World lieth in Wickedness*; we certainly carry the Seeds and Principles of Sin about us, *that will bring forth Fruit unto Death*: or, *A Law in our Members warring against the Law of our Minds, and bringing us into Captivity, unto the Law of Sin*. This

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This is not a piece of *Spiritual Cant*, invented by any *Designing Leaders* of an *Unthinking Herd*; we have traced it in its *Original*; for by *one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin*. And tho' the Sin of this one Man may not be allowed to be the *formal Sin* of the whole World; yet the *Seeds and Principles* of Sin, engendred by this Sin of one Man, and propagated in him thro' the World, cannot be denied. In this Sense, at least, *Death passed upon all, for that all have sinned*. In this Sense, *all have sinned*, and come *short of the Glory of God*. In this Sense, the whole Race of Mankind were by *Nature the Children of Wrath*. The Vengeance of Sin did undoubtedly hang over our Heads, in a State of Nature; and consequently Deliverance and Safety can only be expected in a State of Revelation. For, nothing but God, who is rich in Mercy, for the great Love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in our Sins, hath quickned us together with Christ; by this Grace we are Saved.

Natural Reason will inform us, That the *Wages of Sin is Death*; for since every Sinner lies at the Foot of Infinite Mercy, the Methods of Redemption are lodged in the Hands of God, to be established

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blished as he shall think fit to reveal himself. If God intends a Redemption infinitely more valuable than that Death which he might have exacted in every Man's Person, he may rightfully pitch upon his own Methods, and establish his own Laws of Redemption. The Wisdom and Purity of his own blessed Nature would induce him to contrive a Redemption suitable to the Nature of the Punishment, as well as Crime. He therefore resolved upon a Substitute, or *Mediator*, and required Death for Death, Blood for Blood, even the Blood of the *Immaculate Lamb of God*, a Sacrifice not only negatively Pure, but of infinite inherent Worth and Value.

It was therefore absolutely necessary, God should communicate himself by some special Revelations. The Condition of Mankind was such, that they must be eternally miserable, without some special Communications, and Intercourses with their Maker; and it was an Act of infinite Grace and Mercy, that God was pleased to make his Proposals to his Off-spring. This, certainly, introduces a fresh Covenant between God and Man: God was obliged to signify all his Proposals of Grace and Mercy, or  
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the Riches of his Love, and consequently it was not only extreamly fit, but necessary, that he should give us an entire Body of Laws, established on exprefs Sanctions; and that these should remain as inviolable Conditions on our part, to oblige him to make good all his Overtures and Dispensations. Thus the necessity of Revelation is established upon a Train of Causes, and issues forth of the certain Frame and Posture of Human Affairs and Exigencies. Tho' Natural Reason could instruct us in the Line of Duty, and we acted with Ingenuity and Abilities to regulate our Lives conformable to it; yet, in as much as we have been Sinners, nothing less than a new Covenant established in a Mediator, can entitle us to the Favour of God, or that Happiness to which we were originally created. Let the *Deist* then ridicule the revealed Dispensations of his Maker, as long as he pleases, there's nothing, as yet, revealed, but what is wonderfully accommodated to the State and Condition of Human Nature; nothing but what a Mind, that is not grown leud, and wanton with Lust, will acknowledge to be the Effect of Necessity, as well as infinite Bounty; and he that disputes it,  
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I'm perswaded, is embarked in the same Design with the Psalmist's Fool, *That hath said in his Heart, There is no God.*

§. 8. I hope I have in some measure removed this mighty Objection; and, certainly, nothing remains, but a short Return to the Absurdity, which our Adversaries would throw upon us: *If Revelation, say they, were necessary, God must be obliged to have published it to the whole Race of Mankind.* I'm perswaded, there's no Necessity for Thought, or Art, to expose, or uncover the Nakedness of this Objection. It's abundantly concluded, That Man is the Harbinger to his own Misery; and consequently it's an Act of Grace in God to send Overtures of Deliverance. If he is the Sovereign Lord of Grace, as well in respect of ~~the~~ Time, as the Measure and Extent of it; there's no Injustice in confining it, either as to Time or Place: It's sufficient that he has taken competent Methods for publishing his own Dispensations, wherever he obliges Mankind to the Conditions of it. Upon the whole then, Revelation is necessary, and yet this Necessity does by no means interfere with a Law of Nature antecedent to it.

T H E



THE  
Grounds and Foundation  
OF  
Natural Religion,  
ASSERTED.

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CHAP. I.  
*A Law of Nature antecedent to Re-  
velation.*

AND first for the *Divine Autho-  
rity of a Law of Nature* antecede-  
nt to Revelation, I shall ap-  
peal to the Voice of Scripture,  
as an Argument to those that own the  
Truth and Divinity of it. *For when the  
Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by  
Nature the Things contained in the Law,  
these having not the Law, are a Law unto  
them-*

*themselves ; which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts, the mean while, accusing, or else excusing one another, Rom. 2. 15, 16.* It's manifest when our Apostle tells us of a **Gentile Law** engraven on the Heart, here is a Law distinguished from a Law of Revelation : For the *Gentiles having not the Law*, (no doubt the revealed Law of God, and particularly the Jewish Law) *are a Law unto themselves.* It was not a Law that rested on Patriarchal Revelations, or a Law given by Inspiration, but a Law engraven on the Heart, peculiar to Heathens, or Men in a pure State of Nature ; and consequently no revealed Law. For by virtue of it, they did by *Nature* (not Grace) *the things contained in the Law* ; that is, upon the Evidence and Convictions of Natural Reason, not on the Authority of any external Revelations. For *whilst the Gentiles did by Nature the things contained in the Law, they shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts* ; that is, they had a Rule of Action, implanted in the very Frame and Constitution of their Natures, which answered to all the Designs and Intentions of a Law, or rather carried in it all the Pro-

Properties, as well as Force, and Efficacy of a Law: For the Work and Business of a Law, is to prescribe between Good and Evil, Just and Unjust; to direct us in the precise Line of Duty, and enforce the Observance of it by suitable Rewards and Punishments; and if the Gentiles have this *by Nature*, they are in a strict and proper Sense a Law unto themselves, even without the concurrence of Revelation. Indeed the Apostle elegantly represents the Force, and Authority, as well as Sanction of the Law, when he tells us, that Conscience gives testimony to this Law, *convincing*, and, as it were, confirms, and ratifies it as a Law, or Rule of Action, which answers to the first Office of Conscience, by the Learned called *overthens*. The Sanction follows from the second Office of Conscience, call'd *overduns*, which consists in the Application of our Actions to the Rule, and passing Sentence upon ourselves for it; *and their Thoughts mean while accusing, or excusing one another*. From the words it's manifest there is a Law of Nature, or a Rule of Action given by God, by which he, at least, originally design'd to govern Mankind antecedent to all positive Laws, whether Divine or Humane.

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Nay, it's not only a Law designed for Man in his original Frame, but a Law that maintains its Force and Authority, even in the lapsed State of Mankind. For it's manifest, the Apostle speaks of the Gentiles as they then lay (and all the World too) in a depraved corrupted State. They were undoubtedly under a Law, tho' without any revealed Law, and that too, under the highest force and efficacy of it: For the Apostle expressly determines the case, *For as many* (of the Gentile World) *as have sinned without Law, shall also perish without Law.* v. 12.

However, thus far it is indisputably evident, that the Heathen World was under a Law, or an Indispensable Rule of Action, or Duty, and we are abundantly assur'd, that it was distinct from any revealed Law; since Scripture in other places expressly fixes the Duties of Natural Religion, in an evidence that results from the Works of Providence, the Dictates of Natural Reason, not in any revealed Traditions. Thus St. Paul, and his Associate, speaking of the Gentile State, *Nevertheless he left not himself without Witness*, (no doubt sufficient to instruct them in their Duty) *in that he did good, and gave us Rain from Heaven,*  
and

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*and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness, Acts 14. v. 17. And again, The Wrath of Heaven is revealed against all ungodliness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. Rom. 1. 18, 19, 20. I know the learned Dr. Hammond appropriates this latter Passage to the Gnosticks, but against the whole current of Commentators: And indeed the Context, both before and after, carries such peculiar Characters in it, as renders it absurd to fix it upon any but the Heathen World. If so, it's evident they are the things that are made, and Rain and fruitful Seasons, that are Witnesses, and shew forth to us, that which may be known of God, or the lines of Natural Religion.*

So that the Works of Nature and Providence are our Instructors, not the Voice of Revelation. Here's not the least Hint of any Traditional Conveyances, the Works of Nature carry an Evidence in them; but they are the Reflections of Natural Reason upon them, that draw the Conclusion and form a Duty from them; so that whatever Difficulties, or

Impossibilities some Men may suggest from the Imperfections, and Weaknesses of Natural Reason in decyphering a Law of Nature, it's evident, the Sacred Oracles have given it no other Foundation or Original. And this is Conviction sufficient to silence all other Arguments in those that subscribe to the Truth and Divinity of ~~them~~. *Revelation*

And for those that reject it, I shall, pursuant to the Mind of our Apostle, endeavour to prove a Law of Nature, implanted in the Minds of Men, as Rational Beings, and consequently, originally design'd, as a perpetual Standard and Measure of their Actions.

This I shall endeavour to perform, 1<sup>st</sup>, By proving, that Man is naturally a Thinking, Reasoning Being. 2<sup>dly</sup>, That Man naturally Thinks and Reasons in a fixt determinate way. 3<sup>dly</sup>, That by the exercise of Reason, and the condition of his Nature, he can discern the Subject-matter of the Laws of Nature. And 4<sup>thly</sup>, That he discovers it as the Subject-matter of a true and proper Law, established on a competent Authority, by discerning and receiving it as the Command of God.

§. 2. And 1<sup>st</sup>, That Man is by Nature a Thinking, Reasoning Being.

Indeed, that an Order of Rational Creatures, can of 'emselfes exert the Powers of Reason, seems to be a Proposition, that carries its own Evidence in the Terms of it. And to imagine a Creation of Rational Powers and Faculties, and that too ascribed to an infinitely wise Creator, and yet deny an inherent Power of exerting 'emselfes, seems to reflect the highest Folly and Disgrace upon the Contrivance. For it either represents Infinite Power and Wisdom, displaying 'emselfes, as we say, in vain, or to no purpose, or labouring under the greatest Imperfections. It represents the great Exemplar of a Creative Power, to be little else than a senseless, unactive sort of Machine, whose Efforts entirely depend on foreign Impulses; and *the express Image and Representative of a glorious Creator*, in one sense, to be of a baser Alloy than the unthinking Brutes that perish. Since these, in their original Frame, were made to exert those Powers and Faculties God thought fit to impart to 'em. But Man must by no means act like himself, or display any of his Natural Powers and Faculties,

culties, unless he has the good Fortune to be Born under the Influence of a *skilful Tutor*, and a *polish'd Education*. But certainly this is a Conjecture void of any shadow of Reason. For whosoever considers the Activity of the Souls of Men, (a Truth I think of universal allowance and approbation) cannot imagine, that Men, even in this State, shou'd not be capable of perceiving, discerning, comparing, or thinking at all. But that we may proceed with greater Clearness in these Matters, let us endeavour to strip Mankind of all the Embelishments of Education, and turn 'em into the pure Garb of Nature; and thereupon let us, for once, suppose a Set of Men sprung up like Mushrooms in an instant, and placed in an unpeopled Island in their full growth and vigor. Some, perhaps, in this case, are so fond of attributing the whole Product of Humane Knowledge to the Business of Education, that they would deny them the Power of exerting one Faculty peculiar to a Rational Being without it. But certainly this is a Notion highly improbable, if we consider, that the great Reason why our Infant State discovers such faint Glimpses of Thought or Reason, is not so much from any native Obstructions

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in the Mind, or an Indisposition of her Faculties, in receiving and forming Idea's, but from unknown Indispositions of the Animal Part. For the Souls of Men being to act through Flesh and Blood, or Material Vehicles, no wonder if they do not exert 'emselfes till these are thoroughly fix'd and settled, that is, before they arrive at a due state of Maturity, or a suitable Disposition or Temperament: And therefore were Men to enter upon the World under an exact Disposition of the Animal Part, it's highly probable the Faculties of the Rational Part wou'd exert 'emselfes with wonderful vigour and expedition. Indeed it must be confess'd, that Idea's will be collected, and Principles settled at a much slower rate, where they are only gain'd by a Man's single Observation and Experience, than where the Instructions of Parents and Tutors contribute to the Improvement. By this Means the Observations and Attainments of past Ages are presented in an established Method and Order, and added to our own Experience, and consequently the growth of Idea's will be more quick, clear, and lasting. But yet when the Organs of Sense are rightly fixed and disposed, and the

the Mind lies under no real Incumbrances or Eclipses, it's ridiculous to imagine, that it cannot exert itself by its own native Light and Activity, in all its Powers and Faculties: and we may as well affirm, that a Man would not walk or perform any other indifferent Actions, as a sensitive Creature, without Instruction; as affirm, that he cou'd not think and exert all the Powers of Reason, without special Inspiration, Revelation, or Instruction. It's visible there are certain Springs or Movements implanted in the Frame of Nature, that serve to put all Native Powers and Faculties into their proper Motions: And therefore we must conclude, that a Rational Soul, or a Soul framed for Reason, must act agreeably to its original Frame, and discover itself in all the Functions of Thought and Reason. It's certain, the great Law of Self-preservation, a quick and piercing Sense of Pleasure and Pain, and the incessant Desires of Ease and Happiness, which, strictly speaking, are rather Natural Instincts implanted in all Sensitive Beings, than Laws peculiar to Free Agents, will serve as forcible Springs to every Native Power or Faculty, and furnish 'em with suitable Objects, as well

as prompt 'em to exert upon 'em ; and consequently if Rational Faculties in their Original Frame are fitted for Thought and Reason, they will by an Intrinſick Impulſe exert in all the Parts and Offices of 'em. And therefore, to have recourſe to the Inſtance already given, we may juſtly conclude, that meer Salvages wou'd not only fall to Thinking, but after a few Interviews, form Signs, and Words, and Language, apply 'emſelves to the ſetting of all the Inſtruments of Reaſon and Knowledge. I'm perſwaded, few will deny, that Man by his Natural Powers cou'd form Words and Language, and Words neceſſarily ſuppoſe Idea's and Thoughts. To conclude this Argument then, As Man, by a Law of his Creator, is peculiarly fitted with Organs for Speech and Language, ſo is he endued with Faculties of Reaſon ; and ſince he's capable of exerting the one in all its Deſigns and Functions, we may juſtly allow him the ſame Abilities in exerting the other ; and, in one word, it derogates from the Wiſdom of God, to endue a Creature with Noble Powers and Faculties, and not put him into a condition to exert 'em. Therefore we may conclude, that as Man, by a native Endowment,

ment, can see, and hear, and speak, he can likewise think and reason, which is the First General proposed in order to establish a Law of Nature.

§. 3. I proceed to the Second, which is to prove, That we think and reason in a fix'd and determinate way. And certainly this is a Truth so clear and evident, that it does not admit of any colour of dispute; For otherwise I cannot conceive why we may not question the Perception of the Senses, as well as that of the Mind. The outward Senses, in most Cases, are a kind of Perspectives to the Mind: and the Mind must certainly receive its Notices from the Impressions which outward Objects make upon them; and if Objects make an Impression upon the outward Senses suitable to the Nature of 'em, they must do the same upon the Mind too. So that the first Act of the Mind, that of Perception, must necessarily be regular, and unalterable; for 'tis a Faculty of receiving the Impressions of outward Objects, and of framing Idea's suitable to the nature of 'em; insomuch that where the Object is rightly applied and attended to, the Idea is as certain and unalterable, as Colours

hours to the Eye, or Heat and Cold to the Touch. But now, as the Powers of Perception are certain and unalterable, so are the Powers of Reason; at least in the original frame of 'em.

For Reason, being nothing but the comparing of two or more Idea's to gain a third, or form certain Conclusions and Deductions from 'em; as long as the Perception is regular and correct, Reason must be so too; especially where there's a due Application of the Object or Idea, and attention of Mind too. Indeed that the Reason of Mankind is fixt and certain, or acts in a true and regular Sphere, is evident from a Complication of Arguments.

As 1<sup>st</sup>, It cannot be imagined why Reason shou'd not be established upon certain Rules and Measures, as well as all other Powers of the Creation; and it's a manifest Reproach cast upon the Author of Nature to allow, that the Laws and Appetites of the Vegetative and Animal Part of the World should be fix'd and regular, and that the Powers and Faculties of the Rational Part of the Creation a random kind of Ordinance, altogether precarious and uncertain. But then, whosoever allows God to be the Author of our Beings, God to be the  
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Standard of Wisdom and Reason, and the Reason of Mankind to be an immediate Transcript of it, must conclude, that Reason is established upon fix'd Measures and Principles. For God is unalterable in all his Measures and Workings; his Wisdom and Reason is uniform and invariable, consistent with it self; and that Reason he has imparted to any of his Creatures, and consequently the Reason of Mankind must correspond with all this in a lower degree or proportion. So that where all Impediments are removed, where Idea's or Objects are presented to the View of the Mind, and the Mind closely attends to 'em, the Appearance of Things must be the same every-where; I mean in every Intelligent Being. The Reason of one Man must be the Reason of every Man, and the Reason of Men must be the Reason of God and Angels too. This, perhaps, would be allowed to be an unquestionable Truth, had Man retained the Primitive Lustre and Perfection of all his Intellectual Faculties; or were not false Idea's suggested, and true ones disguised by the Corruptions and Exorbitances of the Animal Part. But certainly this does not destroy but perplex the Workings of  
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Reason; it discovers the Imperfections and Difficulties, not the Uncertainty of Reason; the Mind is by this means often call'd off, and deprived of that Application and Attention, which is indispensably required in the Disquisition of Things, and particularly in the Discovery as well as Observance of all Laws. But when these are secured, I mean when there's a due Application and Attention maintain'd, Reason will be the same in a depraved and degenerate State, as it was in a State of Innocence. Indeed I'm perswaded the true Reason why Man under a degenerate State is so much affected in his Intellectuals, is the Violence and Exorbitance of the Animal Appetites, whereby the Mind is called off from deliberating the true Nature of Things, and consequently determins in conformity to 'em upon any plausible Suggestions and Appearances; or if she has conceived true Idea's, yet they are in a great measure suppress'd and stifled by the Impulses of Lust, and she carried away by the powerful Overtures of a present Pleasure. But I do not find, that the Mind in this State is absolutely disabled from discerning the true Nature of Things or Actions. The Sallies of the  
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Animal Part are not always so powerful, but there are certain Minutes or Intervals wherein she may attend to, and deliberate upon peculiar Objects ; and consequently compare and form just Conclusions, according to the Measures of right Reason : So that we may, without Derogation to any State of Grace, affirm, That we are not under absolute Impossibilities in Decyphering the Line of Duty by strict Reasonings, though we may be destitute of Native Strength, to maintain an Uniform or Steady Practice. Thus much the Christian Institutions warrant and confirm, when the Heathen World is concluded under Actual Sin, and *as many as have sinned without Law, are doomed to perish without Law.* For no one will be damned for Impossibilities. But after all, should we allow, that the OEconomy of Reason, in this lapsed State, is very much shaken and dissolved ; so that all our Reasonings are very precarious and uncertain ; yet we cannot but conclude, that it was originally established upon fixed Rules and Principles ; and consequently, that we were formed by an Intrinsick Power and Efficacy, to exert every Faculty in such a manner, as wou'd enable us to answer all those Ends  
and



and Designs that God hath laid upon us as Men and Reasonable Creatures. And this is sufficient to expose the Assertion of our Adversaries, that will have all our Notices enter the Soul, as it were, by Chance, that is, by Revealed Tradition, Education, or Instruction. It's manifest they do not reject our Attainments of this kind upon the Argument of Native Depravities, but upon the Argument of Native Imperfections: In as much as the Soul, being *Rasa Tabula*, is equally prepared to receive contradictory Impressions; and consequently its Native Powers and Faculties imply nothing but a Capacity to receive the Informations or Instructions of others. Upon the whole then, since it's concluded, that the original OEconomy of Reason is even (in a lapsed State) only veiled and fully'd, not wholly defac'd; we may still affirm, that the Soul retains a Faculty of Thinking and Reasoning in an established way: Inasmuch, that when Objects are fairly presented to the Mind, and the Mind dwells and deliberates upon 'em, she will still be determin'd according to the Nature, Properties, and Agreement or Disagreement of the things 'emselv's. And therefore we are thus far advanced to-

wards a Law of Nature, that we are acted by a Principle which serves to steer and direct us in the disquisition of the Subject-matter of a Law or Rule of Action, and that too such a Rule as serves as a Law, not only to particular Persons, but to the whole Species. For since it is concluded, that Man is acted by a Principle that naturally Thinks, Perceives, and Reasons, and this Thought, Reason, and Perception is founded upon uniform Measures and Principles, it must prescribe in common to the whole Species, as well as particular Persons.

§. 4. The next Inquiry is the Subject-matter of the Law of Nature, how this arises, and is discover'd to us so as to form a Law upon it: And *ist*, To state this Matter with greater clearness, give me leave to have recourse to the Instance already assign'd, that of Savages, plac'd in the World without the Bias of *Education* or *Instruction* upon 'em. It's already concluded, that Men, even in this pure State of Nature, are Thinking, Reasoning Beings; and it may reasonably be imagin'd, that the great Law of Self-preservation, or an incessant Desire of Ease and Happiness, will be the Spring and Move-

Movement to their first Thoughts and Reasonings. This, as has been already observed, is rather a Natural Instinct, implanted in all Sensitive Beings, than a Law given to free Agents. For every Individual, that is capable of Pleasure or Pain, is violently disposed to secure his own Preservation; and therefore those Beings that are endowed with Rational Powers and Faculties, and can Think, Deliberate, and Examine the Nature of Things, will certainly turn the Mind upon themselves, and engage their first Thoughts in surveying the Nature and Condition of their Beings. For without some knowledge of this kind, it's impossible they shou'd apply themselves to the true methods of Self-preservation. And hence, no doubt, arises the Subject-matter of the Law of Nature. For certainly all those Laws, which have justly obtain'd the Name or Character of Laws of Nature, are formed from the Consideration of Ourselves, or which is the same thing, from the Consideration of the Nature and Circumstances of our Beings, compared with those things that are without us. That this is not a groundless Conjecture, the Rule of Social Virtues established by our Blessed Saviour, and advanced by the

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best Moralists, sufficiently attests: *Whatsoever you wou'd that Men shou'd do unto you, do you that also unto them.* Here's a manifest Appeal to ourselves; and consequently implies a strict survey of our Nature, and the relation we stand in to other Beings, as well as of our own Wants and Necessities. And certainly, whosoever turns his Mind and Thoughts upon himself, and considers his own Frame and Original, his Dependences and Methods of Subsistence, will presently furnish himself with Matter enough to make up the Laws of both Tables; those we owe to God, and those we owe to Men. A little Thought will instruct us, that we were formed by some first Cause, who must be infinite in all his Attributes and Perfections: And as little Thought and Observation, that this first Cause implanted certain Passions in our Natures; such as Love and Hatred, Hope and Fear, and all the intermediate ones; such as Admiration, Tenderness and Compassion, as well as Anger, Aversion and Fury; and consequently we must conclude, that the Author of Nature has adapted them to peculiar Objects, and appointed 'em to special Ends and Purposes. And from hence we have a clear view of those

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Duties we owe to God; such as Love, Worship, Fear, Reverence, Trust and Dependence: For the consideration of a Creator, and our dependence on him as Creatures, will instruct us, that we are to devote the chiefest of those Powers, Faculties, or Passions he has implanted in us, to his Service and Honour. Again, for the Laws of the Second Table, the consideration of the methods of our Subsistence will instruct us, that we are in a great measure maintain'd by foreign Aids and Succours, that we subsist upon the Art and Blessings of Labour, as well as Nature; and these are to be carried on by Creatures that can Reason, Think, and Project as we do: And this will prompt us to Society, and ingage us to apply ourselves to those Creatures that most resemble ourselves, and are most capable of serving or administering outward Goods and Blessings to us. The necessary methods of Subsistence, and the condition of our Natures will presently instruct us in the Rights of Property; and consequently give us a view of the Necessity of Promises, Compacts or Engagements; and our indispensable Obligations to maintain and execute 'em. And from all these Notices results the

Law of universal Justice. We cannot kill  
 nor assault the Persons of our Neighbours,  
 because it's a wounding or stabbing our  
 selves; since it cuts off that Circulation  
 of Blessings we live by. We cannot spoil  
 or plunder the Goods of our Neighbour,  
 because that affects us in the same manner  
 as that of Murther. To proceed, hence re-  
 sult the Laws of universal Love, Tender-  
 ness and Compassion: For we find these  
 Passions implanted in the Frame of our ve-  
 ry Natures; And where can we think to  
 fix and exert them better, than on those  
 that contribute to our Subsistence? This  
 naturally begets a Sense of Benefits, and  
 those of Love and Compassion. In a  
 word, Self-preservation suggests Self-love,  
 and a Tenderness, and Kindness towards  
 ourselves; and consequently it will exer-  
 cise the very same Affections to the bene-  
 fit of others. For since Love, Tender-  
 ness, and Compassion, are the most pow-  
 erful Engagements to link others to our  
 Interest, and our Interest and Welfare  
 rests upon the Welfare of others; to be  
 kind, compassionate and loving to o-  
 thers, is to be so to ourselves. These  
 are Laws recorded in such legible Cha-  
 racters, that the Subject-matter of them has  
 discovered itself to meer Savages, that  
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sprung up like Mushrooms, tho' there were no such Relation as Husband and Wife, Parent or Children, or in a word, were no way allied or dependent but by the common Condition and Principles of Humanity. Here needs no long Train of Thoughts, Consequences and Deductions, whereby the Mind under the highest Improvements is often bewaldred, overfet and confounded. The common Necessities of our Natures and the condition of our Beings, forcibly direct us to the discovery; a single Inference will give us a full view: So that were the Mind left to her own native Exercitations, before she had contracted a Bias from Example, or a vicious Education, they must unavoidably appear in some of her first and earliest Reasonings. Indeed I will not affirm, that every one in this case cou'd discover the Subject-matter of the prime Laws of Nature, in that Train of Thought, or from those very Topicks and Arguments that are here projected. It's sufficient if they are natural and obvious, and carry an Evidence suitable to what they are apply'd and are design'd to prove. There may a thousand Arguments suggest the same thing, and therefore it is not material which way we

come by it. That which is most considerable is, that it appears the Subject-matter of the Laws of Nature, lies upon the Surface, and offers itself to the first Dawnings of Reason: It is as fixt and certain as the first workings of Reason (for both result from the established Frame or Nature of Things) and is mixed with the prime Ends and Interests of our Beings; and we must first change the Course of Nature, and new model the Creator as well as the Creature, and give new Faculties, new Passions, and new Beings; before the Matter of the Laws of Nature can be changed. Thus we have advanc'd a considerable way in the Proof of a Law of Nature; since it appears we are acted by a uniform Principle within, that is able to furnish us with the Subject-matter of Laws or Rules of Action.

§. 5. But now, since the Subject-matter of Laws is fixt and determined, the last Requisite to give any thing the Character of a Law, is to establish it upon a competent Authority, whereby the Counsels and Dictates of Reason are advanced into indispensable Rules of Action. It's certain Reason is the sovereign Principle of the Man; and consequent-

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ly if she pleases, may pass an Obligation upon all her own Decrees, as far as concerns the particular Person, where she presides. But she cannot pass an Obligation upon other Persons, without some binding Authority, that presides over her and them too; and consequently cannot establish a Law of Nature, which carries an Obligation, that extends to the whole Species; this supposes an Authority superiour to that of particular Persons. Again, the natural Conveniences, and Inconveniences of things may engage us to embrace and pursue particular Dictates of Reason; but these Dictates of Reason may not be a binding, and indispensable *an* Rule of Action; so as to render us criminal in case we do not pursue, and embrace them; which is the Purport, and Business of all Laws. And therefore, before these Dictates of Reason are to be received as true and proper Laws; we must prove, that they are imposed by a competent Authority, an Authority that has a Right to impose a Rule of Action upon us; an Authority that has a Right to impose the Dictates of Reason as a Rule of Action, and that this Authority has actually imposed 'em as Laws, and consequently, the Non-observance of 'em must

must bring Guilt and Punishment upon us. These are all Positions that must appear in the workings of Natural Reason, before any Dictates of Reason can pass for Laws of Nature. Now this will abundantly appear by placing the Authority of Laws of Nature in the Author of Nature; for tho' that which we call Reason or Conscience, is the Law-giver, that immediately prescribes, determines, and fixes the Obligation of our Actions; yet this is but a delegated Authority, derived from the Author of Nature, the very Author of Reason and Conscience, and our very Beings too. So that Reason acts by the Authority of a Vicegerent, but the Original Sovereignty derives from God, or the Author of Nature. Natural Reason and Conscience is but a Law-giver, like *Moses* that delivered the Law to the People; but the original Authority is seated within the Cloud of Glory, and the Divine Nature; whose Face no Mortal can behold, and live: That there is a God, and an Author of Nature, the consideration of ourselves will abundantly evince; and the Right of God's Authority in imposing Laws, and particularly in assigning Reason and Conscience a power of giving Laws, cannot be disputed. For he that gave

gave us our Being, may rightfully assign the Laws of our Being. Therefore we sufficiently prove the Authority of Laws of Nature, if we can prove that God, as our Creator, has appointed certain Dictates of Reason for an indispensable Rule of Action to Mankind. And certainly this is a Position almost Self-evident; for it follows from the bare Allowance and Consideration of the Author of Nature. If Natural Reason assures us that God made us, and not we ourselves, we must conclude, that we have the Strokes and Lineaments of Infinite Wisdom set forth in us. For, the Works of Nature and Providence, are no less an effect of Infinite Wisdom, than Power: *For in Wisdom hath he made them all.* And if it was Infinite Wisdom that induced a Creator to give us such a peculiar Model, whereby we are distinguished from the rest of his Creatures, the same Infinite Wisdom must intend we should act and govern ourselves by it. The Intention of the Law-giver is as much express'd by reasonable Creatures, acting upon Dictates of Reason, as by the Powers and Tendencies of Inanimate Beings pursuing the Course and Order of Nature. He hath given Laws to the Waves of the Sea,

Sea, that they may not pass; and to the Sun that knoweth his going down, Psal. 104. v. 18, 19. And shall not Man, the Glory of his Maker, and the proper Subject of a free and valuable Obedience, be obliged by the Laws of his Creation; and make that the Rule of Action, which Infinite Wisdom has made the Mark or Characteristick of his Being; whereby he is distinguished from the inferiour Classes of the Creation, as well as Evidences of his Creator's Honour and Glory? In a word, since God perpetually acts by the Dictates of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, his own Institutions or Ordinances are an indisputable Evidence of his most sacred Will and Pleasure; and the Laws of all his Creatures are as amply recorded in that Frame and Constitution he has given 'em, (being all as much bound to act by 'em) as if he had recorded 'em on Tables of Stone. For 'tis a Record engraved on Nature, and consequently will be preserved as long as Nature has a Being. These are Notices that offer 'emselfes to the first Dawnings of Reason, or, at least, flow in upon an Assent to this fundamental Truth, that we are the Product or Workmanship of an All-wise and Almighty Creator.

§. 6. But further, the Authority of Laws of Nature is evident from the Ends and Designs of Created Nature.

And 1<sup>st</sup>, As Natural Reason instructs us, That there is a wise and intelligent Author of Nature, even the Author of that very Faculty we call Reason, which suggests thus much to us ; we must conclude, that he neither gave Being to that nor any thing else, without annexing some special Ends and Designs to it. If therefore, to pursue the Dictates of reasonable Creatures, can only secure those Ends for which we were created reasonable Creatures, the Dictates of Reason must carry the Authority and Obligation of Laws in 'em : But now should we pronounce one special End of Man's Creation to be the Manifestation of his Honour and Glory, and particularly the Exemplification of his Wisdom and Power ; it's manifest the only way to answer this Design, is to exert those surprising Faculties God has bestowed.

Again, If God did create Man a reasonable Being to make him capable of Happiness, and put him into a condition of attaining it ; It's certain he designed him for Happiness by implanting such  
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incessant Desires after it; and its certain there is no way of attaining Happiness, but by pursuing the strict Dictates of Reason. Happiness can consist in nothing but the perfection of our Natures, or in a resemblance of their primitive Model, and the great Original they represent: And it's Reason alone, and a course of Action advanced upon it, that can exhibit this Happiness in its true Lineaments and Proportions.

In a Word, Were Happiness carried no further than the welfare of the Animal Part; It's certain, that Temperance, that Friendship, that Generosity, and that Justice, which Natural Reason, from the very frame and condition of our Natures, suggests and prescribes, are the only Instruments for securing it; therefore we must conclude, since an *All-wise* and *Almighty* Creator could not act Blindfold; since he assigned every Order of Creatures peculiar Ends, and establish'd a general End from all of 'em; and since an *All-wise* Creator must be concerned to have those Ends answered, which he hath assign'd; Reason must be a Rule and a Standard of Action in all Reasonable Creatures; without which the Ends and Designs of Reasonable Creatures cannot

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be attain'd. And thus we have the Intention of the Law-giver evinced from the Ends and Designs of reasonable Creatures.

6. 7. There is one Argument more that proves the Obligation and Authority of Laws of Nature, and certain Dictates of Reason to be such; and that is, From the consideration of Rewards and Punishments that flow from 'em.

It's well known that Rewards and Punishments are an inseparable Appendage of a Law, and where we are not only directed by a lawful Authority, that this or that thing is to be done, but Rewards are annexed to the doing of it, and Punishments to the omission of it, or at least doing the contrary, there the Authority is expressed and represented; and consequently the thing directed is proposed as a Law or Rule of Action. But now it's already concluded, that those Dictates of Reason which necessarily arise from the Frame and Condition of our Natures, carry inseparable Rewards in 'em, and the Violation of 'em entails inseparable Mischiefs or Punishments upon us; and therefore such Dictates of Reason do as evidently declare the Intention

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on of the Law-giver, and the Obligation of Laws, as if we were told it by an audible Voice from Heaven: And thus we have asserted the Authority of Laws of Nature, being the last Requisite assigned for the Proof of 'em. And, truly, there are so many Arguments suggest it, that we may as well deny that we can Think by Nature, as be ignorant of the Authority of Laws of Nature.

§. 8. But, after all that has been said concerning the Authority of Laws of Nature, some perhaps will imagine that the Arguments already suggested, are rather the Improvements of Reason, under a State of Revelation, and the Discipline of a civilized Education, than the Discoveries of Reason, in a pure State of Nature. I must confess, it is difficult to distinguish the pure Efforts of Natural Reason from those Improvements she receives from Revelation, and a polished Education; but certainly we may appeal to Revelation itself, for the Authority of Laws of Nature, and particularly that the Dictates of Natural Reason are to be the Measure and Standard of our Actions. For, first, Conscience we know is the Result and Decree of Reason; and this



this is advanc'd to such an absolute Sovereignty in the Christian Institution, that we cannot reject the Instructions of an erroneous Conscience, without entailing Sin and Guilt upon us. For even to Heathens and Unbelievers, *Whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*; and certainly it amounts to a Demonstration, That if God has given no other Rule to Reasonable Beings, but Reason to act by, we must conclude, that Reason must be the Standard of Action; and consequently every one is under an Indispensable Obligation of pursuing it, unless we can imagine we are not to exert Actions peculiar to our Nature, or that God has not as industriously distinguished the Actions of Men from those of Brutes, as their Souls and Shape too. In a word, whosoever owns the Truth and Authority of the Christian Institutions, must discern the Truth and Authority of Laws of Nature; for he may plainly read both in the great End and Design of Christianity; for the whole OEconomy of Grace consists in restoring the OEconomy of Nature, and renewing that Image of our Minds, in which we were created; or which is the same thing, in the Apostle's Language, *In being renewed*

*in Knowledge after the Image of him that created him, Col. 3. 10. In a word, Christianity is the putting on the New Man, which, after God, is created in Righteousness and true Holiness; and the putting on the New Man, is the putting on the first Man that was formed after the Image of God, in Righteousness and true Holiness; therefore we must conclude, that Model which God impress'd on our Nature was design'd to be a Law, and a Rule, or Standard to our Actions, and consequently the Powers of Natural Reason, wou'd have thought it to be a Law, had Revelation never interposed in the Matter. Thus we have proved, that there is a Law of Nature, even in all the Circumstances and Formalities of a Law; it's a Law distinct from the Law of Revelation, since it arises, and is discovered to us by pure Dint of Natural Reason; it's a true and proper Law, for it contains the Matter and Form of a proper Law, the Subject-matter is fix'd and determin'd. It has the Form of a Law, because it determines what is to be done, and that too upon a just and competent Authority, and when all this is granted, it gives us the Sanctions of a Law, I mean Rewards and Punishments.*

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For if Reason dictates certain indispensable Rules of Action, from the Authority, Will and Pleasure of a Sovereign Creator, Reason must, besides those natural Rewards and Punishments that accompany the Observance of such Rules, at least acknowledge, That the Non-observance of 'em, must bring Guilt and Punishment upon us. And therefore I see nothing wanting (notwithstanding Mr. Hobbs's Notions of a Law) to give it the Title and Denomination of a proper Law. For it's as much, *Vox imperantis*, and as truly promulg'd, as if it had been recorded in Writing, or engraved on Tables of Brass.

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## C H A P. II.

*Objections Answered.*

**I**T now only remains, that something be offered to take off the Force of those Objections, that are advanced against this Hypothesis, of a Law of Nature exclusive of Revelation. The Sum of which is, in a few words, this:

Whatsoever has been hitherto attributed to the Powers of Natural Reason, seems to exist no where but in the Imaginations of Speculative Men. For not only the Lives and Opinions of Heathen Nations, but of the most eminent Moralists and Phylosophers have overturned the Scheme, and passed off the Stage of the World under the Conduct of quite opposite Notions. This is an Objection that will fall in with other parts of this Discourse, and consequently will require something of a Return under each respective Head; but that I may lay a Foundation for a clear and distinct Answer, I shall take liberty to make a few Remarks upon the *Origin of Error*.

§. 1. And, first, it's a very unquestionable Truth, that the Errors of Mankind are originally founded in vicious Habits or Immoralities; or to speak in other Terms, the Seeds of this kind of Corruption are certainly lodged in the Propensions and Habits of the Animal Part. For that which has such an Ascendant over us, to command us to Act in favour of it, will infallibly influence our Judgments. This is so obvious, that in wilful Enormities, I mean such as were first committed against the Convictions of the Mind, the Power of Animal Propensions, Assiduity of Practice, and a kind of Natural Intimacy or Familiarity resulting from it, has at last engaged Reason itself to appear as an Advocate for it; and very often it makes such elaborate Researches for Arguments to support the Cause, that at last it declares for the Justice and Innocence of it, and asserts it upon Principle and inward Conviction. I am perswaded, and can without breach of Charity or Justice, affirm, That the Growth of the foulest Heresies in the Christian World is to be placed in this Original. Men have so long given the full Reins to Pride, Ambition, Covetousness,

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of vetousness, or other vitious Lusts and Propensions, that they have called in their whole Stock of Parts and Learning, and made Converts to their Judgments to support them, or revenge their Disappointments.

And now, upon this Bottom, we may silence all Objections brought from the absurd, and Heterodox Opinions of certain Moralists and Philosophers. For, it's highly probable, they were at first but exquisite Apologies to Patronize importunate Passions, and confirm'd Practices; and consequently can be no real Prejudices to a Law of Nature. Indeed, the impure Doctrine of the *Gnosticks* may be as well admitted a just Plea against the Truth and Purity of Christianity, and the Evidences for both, as some few lewd Doctrines of Philosophers against the Certainty of a Law of Nature, upon the Evidences of Natural Reason.

§. 2. But, to enlarge a little on this part of the Objection, it's well known that the foulest and most absurd Opinions, charged on particular Philosophers, are by others recorded as an eternal Mark of Infamy and Reproach due to 'em; and consequently they are by no means

a just Balance to the substantial Reasonings of others, in deciphering Laws of Nature. We might add to all this, how unjust a Measure the Practices of Mankind is of their real Notices of Moral Good, an Argument too fatally demonstrated under a Christian Dispensation; and consequently tho' the Generality of Philosophers liv'd in Opposition to Laws of Nature, and some few taught contrary to 'em, yet it's no just Consequence to place Laws of Nature above the Researches of Natural Reason. I am perswaded some of the Instances presented in a late Conference \*, do not fall under the Character of prime Laws of Nature; and consequently do not reach the Author's Design. It's very well known, *Plato's* Model for Peopling his Commonwealth was not by a Community of Women, without Limitations from the Civil Power. But for the precise Limitations in this matter, as well as the manner of Worshipping God, whether by Sacrifices and corporeal Representations, I presume, it's the business of Revealed Religion to fix and determine. As for his Instance of Masculine Vener<sup>y</sup>, *Zoro*, and his Followers pronounced it indifferent; I presume it was a previous

\* See Conference with  
a Theist,  
Part 2. p. 56,  
to p. 64.

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Practice that had made it appear so. And yet St. *Paul* speaks of some of these unnatural Whoredoms as things scarce named among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. 5. 1. But it were highly to be wished that some Nations in the Confines of Christendom, had wholly escaped the Contagion; so that if such vile Practices in a State of Nature may be an Argument against Laws of Nature antecedent to Revelation, it will be of Force against written Revelations: Since Laws of Nature founded in the Dictates of natural Reason, may be as easily violated as any written Law. Certainly such avowed Practices may with greater force of Reason be allowed against a Law that pretends to no higher Authority than Revelation, or supported by Tradition. Lastly, As for the *Gracian* Piece of Cruelty, in exposing Children to the Mercy of Beasts, and Travellers, without remorse, I presume the Practice was not frequent, because it must be the Concern and Interest of every Government to suppress it. But it's well known, the Christian World is not wholly freed from such Monsters, who I am afraid are acted by no other Dread but what the Apprehensions of a Discovery, and the



the Penalties of the Law extort from them. However, this is an Instance so absolutely repugnant to the common Bowels of Humanity, that it as effectually disproves those Earnings which natural Instinct discovers in the whole Order of Brutes towards their own Off-spring, as that natural Reason discovers the same Earnings to be a point of Duty to Mankind. In one word, the Cruelties of Heathens is no more an Argument that natural Reason doth not teach the contrary, than the Barbarity of some particular Christians an Argument, that Christianity does not exhort to Bowels of Compassion, and a Parental Care towards their own Off-spring.

But to return: A second Cause of Error is certain Prejudices or Prepossessions imprinted on the Mind by Example and Education. The Cause and Origin of Error already given presents us with the Propensions and Bias of Humane Nature, and consequently how liable the World is to be overspread with Error. At least Matter of Fact informs us how wide the Actions of Men deviate from the Line of Duty, so that it may truly be said of the Heathen World, That the *Imaginations of their Hearts is to do Evil*

*continually.* Certainly then, where a Contagion extends itself not only to the Judgments, but Practices of Mankind; and not only corrupt Principles, but vicious Examples prevail in Parents, Guardians and Tutors, the Minds of their Descendents will be deeply impregnated with pernicious Prejudices and Prepossessions. They are implanted among the first and earliest Impressions, even before the Powers of Reason exert themselves. This, I am confident, is the Case of the uncultivated Regions of Mankind: And certainly, when Reason comes to exert it self under such a fatal Bias, no wonder if she often falls into very gross Miscarriages. And yet this is the inevitable Portion of Mankind, that are brought forth in a State of Impotence, as well in Mind as Body; and can hardly arrive to any Growth in Reason, before they arrive to a Maturity in Body. But now, these things being laid together, and admitted; it's very unjust to reject the Divine Oeconomy of Laws of Nature antecedent to Revelation, because the unavoidable Prepossessions of some Men have carried them besides the Mark, so as to contradict the general Lines of Duty: For, it's apparent,

parent, were Men to enter the World in the Strength and Power of Reason, without the Clog and Encumbrance of antecedent Prepossessions (as in the Instance already given, See Chap. 1. Sect. 2.) It's impossible but the Fundamental Line of Duty must present it self to the first workings of Reason; and the prime Laws of Nature would be as legible to the Eye of the Mind, as they would be to the outward Senses, when graved on Tables of Stone. But now, as the Case stands, I mean with regard to a degenerate State; the Objections before us prove no more than the Miscarriages of Reason, but do not overturn that Frame or Model which God hath established. So that Reason in her Enquiries after a Law of Nature, appears to be placed under great Difficulties; but yet Laws of Nature may, for all this, be the Product, and Workings of natural Reason.

## C H A P. III.

## Of the Argument of Universal Consent.

**H**AVING now, in some measure, Answered what I proposed; *which was to prove a Law of Nature antecedent to Revelation*, and rescued the *Hypothesis* from the Objections that threatened it; before I dismiss this Argument, I shall offer something in reference to what a late *Author* has advanced against the Argument of Universal Consent, under colour of exploding *innate Ideas*, or practical Principles; but will serve as well against a Law of Nature.

§. 1. And first, it's very observable, This *Gentleman* has industriously amassed together all the Filth and Off-scouring of a reprobate Mind, and a defiled Conscience, and of a People that seem'd to be abandoned by God; and consequently nursed up in a universal Impiety. He has sent us to all the Creeks and Corners of Barbarity under the Verge  
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of Heaven, to see Rapes, Murders, and the vilest Incests practised, with universal Approbation and Allowance; yea, rather with an Opinion of Vertue and Merit; to see whole Nations or Tribes of Men living *without God in the World*, without any Foot-steps of Worship, or so much as a Name for God. [Lock's *Humane Understanding*, B. 1. Cap. 3. §. 9.] And upon all this concludes, *That there is scarce that Principle of Morality to be named, or Rule of Vertue to be thought on, (those only excepted that are absolutely necessary to hold Society together, which commonly too are neglected betwixt distinct Societies) which is not somewhere or other slighted, and condemned by the general Fashion of whole Societies of Men, governed by practical Opinions, and Rules of living quite opposite to others.* §. 10. And the Argument drawn from all this, is levelled against universal Consent, and innate Principles: [For thus the Author, §. 9. *Where then are those innate Principles of Justice, Piety, Gratitude, Equity, Chastity; or where is that universal Consent that assures us there are such inbred Rules?*] And certainly the Argument carries the same Force against a Law of Nature, and the eternal Distinctions

distinctions of Good and Evil: For may  
 not the Latitudinarian in Triumph de-  
 mand, Where is that universal Consent,  
 that assures us there are Laws of Na-  
 ture, or indispensable established Rules  
 of Morality? Nay, to have recourse to  
 his Methods of Arguing, since contrary  
 practical Principles are asserted by whole  
 Nations as the avowed Rules of Living;  
 since Remorse in some attends the vilest  
 Iniquities, whilst others think they  
*he* merit by 'em; may not we expostulate,  
 Where are those natural Measures of  
 Right and Wrong, those natural Distincti-  
 ons of Good and Evil? See §. 9, 10, 11.  
 Certainly these are Deductions as strong  
 and cogent, as those against innate Princi-  
 ples: I am sure they will pass for such in  
 the Judgment of some Men that care not  
 Mr. Lock's Doctrine concerning Innate  
 Ideas, since he is not content to explode  
 all innate practical Principles, but assigns  
 no other Foundation or Original, besides  
 Custom, Education, the Superstition of  
 a Nurse, or the Authority of an Old  
 Woman. See §. 22, 23, 26. This Au-  
 thor, in a Letter to the Learned Bishop  
 of Worcester, observes, That the Founda-  
 tion of all Religion, and genuine Morali-  
 ty, being established in the Belief of a  
 God,

God, no Arguments that are made use of to work the Persuasion of a God, should be invalidated, page 113, 114. And, certainly Reason should have obliged him, to have used the same Caution, not only in invalidating Arguments that are advanced to prove a Law of Nature, the true ground of Morality; but in advancing Arguments that do not more directly destroy the Doctrine of innate Ideas, than a Law of Nature. It's true, were the Doctrine of innate Ideas, or practical Principles no way to be disproved, but by exposing the Concept of universal Consent, the Method had been very pardonable; but this Author confesses, that were the Argument admitted, it proves no Idea or Principle to be innate, B. 1. Cap. 2. §. 3. And therefore I am afraid he was acted by no good Design, to muster up all his Forces against an Argument that does him no Disservice, especially when his Methods of attacking it, are more fatal against the whole Body of Morality. But to make some Returns to these Harangues, I shall not now consider how far practical Principles may be said to be innate, this will fall in its proper place; but I think we have no reason to cashier the Argument of universal Consent, which if there is any such thing

thing, must be a considerable Evidence of a Law of Nature, and the irreconcilable Distinctions of Good and Evil. And first, I think Mr. *Lock* needed not to have sent us to *Africa* and the *Indies*, to the most rude and uncultivated Parts of the World, to explode the Doctrine of an universal Consent, as to Chastity, Humanity, and other moral Vertues. For the sacred Canon, if he will allow it to be Authentick, would have furnished him with national Enormities that were as much the Fashion of their Countries and the approved Rules of Living, as any he has produced. Did not the seven Nations practise the vilest Incests, was it not a piece of Devotion to sacrifice there Off-spring to *Moloch*,

*Lev.* See *Rev.* 18. *Ezek.* 23. and in a word, to practise a thousand Abominations?

As for particular Nations that had not so much as a Name of God (if in reality there were any such) I think they were not more remarkable, than those *that had not God in all their Thoughts*. And when the vilest Immoralities are produced with a national Esteem and Approbation, I think they are not worse than those *St. Paul* has charged the Heathen World with, in more places than

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one, who being past Feeling, have given themselves over to Lasciviousness, to work all Uncleanness with greediness. [See Ephes. 4. v. 18, 19. Rom. 1. v. 20, 25.] and yet I think there can be no just Authority against an Universal Consent, as to Laws of Nature, or Practical Principles. If this were so, Universal Consent may be as well rejected in the Proof of Rational Faculties, or at least in the Establishment of Reason and Truth upon any certain Foundation; and consequently they are to be resolved into meer Chance or Fortune: for the Contradictions (recorded by St. Paul) to the plain Rules of Morality, are as absolute Contradictions to the Allowance or Supposition of Rational Faculties, and the natural Frame and Foundation of Reason, as they are to Laws of Nature, or the natural Features of Good and Evil. The Mistake, I think, is obvious from a very few Considerations, tho' God has implanted Faculties of Reason, which, if rightly exercised and applied, will discern Things as they really are, and pronounce certain Matters or Things, indispensable Rules of Action: Yet, since there's a fatal Bias on our Natures, and these Faculties do not Act necessarily, nor are Things al-

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ways duly presented to their View, nor do they yield a due Attention to 'em; Notions may be impressed, that may almost overturn the very Frame of Nature, or destroy the natural Appearances of Good and Evil, Vice and Vertue; and therefore Men may by the Bias of Education, Custom, and irregular Appetites, come to espouse the most horrid Impieties, for Heroick Vertues; may practise the grossest Enormities, not only with Approbation, but an Opinion of Merit. I'm sure Christianity supposes little less, when we are assured of *Seared Consciences*; *when the Mind, or Understandings, as well as Consciences, may be defiled*, Tit. 1. 3. when the Understanding may be darkned (to that degree) as to *be past Feeling*, and to *give us up to work all Uncleanneß with greedineß*. And in a word, when we are instructed that Men may be abandoned by God, and consequently may be given up *to walk in the Vanity of their Minds, to vile Affections, and to work all Uncleanneß*. This may be the Case of private Persons, and of publick Societies too; and no doubt it is the Case of the miserable *Indians* at this Day, as it was once of the *Seven Nations*. And when such invincible Ignorance and Impiety

piety has over-spread a Land, and is become an established Rule of Life to Parents, Governours and Tutors, it must (without some distinguishing Overtures of Grace) be entailed and transmitted to Posterity. But yet for all this the Argument of Universal Consent, as to Laws of Nature and established Rules of Morality, cannot justly be Arrained, we may as well question Man to be a Reasonable Creature, at least on the Authority of Universal Consent, because there are some Fools and Ideots; or a Creature of Symetry and Proportion, because there are some Monsters in the World; as argue against an Universal Consent, because the Barbarity of some Nations contradict it. It's true, Mr. Lock endeavours to take off the force of the Argument, since he seems to call the Judgment of other Nations, that have preserved the great Lines of Laws of Nature, the *private Perswasions of a Party*; whilst we esteem 'em the only Dictates of Right Reason, B. 1. Cap. 3. §. 20. But I hope those vile Practices he has transcribed from those that only retain the Figure of Men, are not to pass for the *Dictates of Right Reason*, nor they the *Men of Right Reason*: And consequently

their Votes or Opinions are not to be received against that Universal Consent we contend for, for certainly, when we appeal to Universal Consent, we cannot be supposed to appeal to Monsters, Apostates, Reprobates or Devils; and yet there may be whole Nations that will fall under one of these Characters. Again, It's possible that natural Powers and Faculties may be so far abused, as to lose their native Vigour and Activity; so that Men may live in a State of Inconsideration and Thoughtlessness, and become as Ignorant and Careless of every Thing, but what the Example and Custom of their Country suggests, as the unthinking Brute that periseth. And this may be the case of Tribes of Men as well as private Persons, and no doubt is the case of the uncultivated Negro's; and therefore it would be highly absurd to take in their Judgments and Opinions, to make up that Universal Consent we contend for.

§. 2. Upon the whole then, when we have recourse to Universal Consent, for the Proof of a Law of Nature, it only implies an Appeal to those Nations or People, that in the Judgment of improved

ved Reason, have passed under the Character of Polished or Civilized ; or that have been justly supposed in some measure to have exerted those Powers and Faculties in Thought and Observation, which God has implanted in the original Frame and Constitution of Mankind. And certainly we have always had the joyn't Consent of such Nations; for most of those Rules and Precepts, which, in the strictest Sense, are esteemed Laws of Nature : I'm sure they have signified or declared it in the most unquestionable Way or Manner ; Inasmuch as they have been selected for the general Subject of civil Laws, and the Practice of 'em enforced by certain civil Penalties or Sanctions. And certainly this is the strongest Argument or Presumption for Laws of Nature that may be, since we cannot imagine, why distinct Nations and Societies of Men, established upon different Maxims and Rules of Policy, as well as Models of Government, should conspire in the Subject-matter of so many Laws ; unless they were by the Light of Reason discoverable to Mankind, as indispensable Rules of Action. And thus I hope I have satisfied the Demands of all reasonable Enquirers, in proving a Law

*The Grounds and Foundation  
of Nature antecedent to Revelation, or  
positive Humane Laws.*

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C H A P. IV.

*Reflections on some Passages in the  
Conference with a Theist, Part 2.*

§. 1. **H**AVING in some measure drawn the Line, and laid the Foundation of natural Religion, or Laws of Nature antecedent to Revelation, I cannot but discover my Dissatisfactions with the Opinion of a late Author, that places the Whole of natural Religion in the Authority of Revelation, that will allow it no other Original but Revelation, and no other Means of Conveyance and Preservation, but Oral Tradition. [See Conference with a Theist, Part 2. Page 32. 36.] Indeed this seems to be a Notion advanced without well considering the Nature, Probability, or Consequences of it. For first, the manner of its Conveyance by Oral Tradition (which this Author was forced to admit of) seems to expose it as a groundless Conjecture. I know he endeavours to remove the Force of

of this Argument, by telling us, That the Duties that pass under the Characters of Laws of Nature, are so natural to the Understanding, so easie to be embraced by it, and upon Proposal seem so to be extreamly Useful to Mankind, that they must be assented to, and can never be mistaken or forgot, p. 36. And consequently there was not the least necessity of any written Records. But certainly this is a Confession, which if well considered, should have directed him to the very Notion he labours to expose. For if Laws of Nature are so natural and obvious to the Understanding that they must be assented to, he might very well have allowed that their extream Usefulness to Mankind would have prompted and enabled Reason to have made the Discovery, without borrowing the whole from Revelation: Certainly, if Reason, by its own intrinsic Light and Activity, could not go thus far, he must suppose the Souls of Men, tho' God's express Image and Representative, to be the most imperfect, impotent Parts of the Creation. But then that Laws of Nature are not so easily assented to, or can never be mistaken or forgot, I should have thought his own Remarks upon the Lives and Do-

Strines of Philosophers, and in a word, on the Manners and Notions of the Heathen World, had been a sufficient Confutation. Most of these, we must suppose, received something from his imaginary Line of Tradition, and therefore since he has made 'em so basely to pervert the Rules of it, he might have justly concluded that Providence, who knew well what was in Man, must have judged it necessary to have inculcated Laws of Nature, either by frequent Visions, or committed them to Writing, as well as the other parts of his revealed Will. And therefore his own Objection seems to stand good against him, on his own Principles: *That Tradition is not so proper a means to convey Morality by to Mankind, because of its liableness to Corruption, and that it would have been more sensibly vitiated than we find it is, had it descended by this Method.* And truly the Objection carries force in it, for were Humane Reason so desperately Impotent, as the Picture he seems to have presented the World with, represents; I cannot conceive what Service a few blind Oral Traditions would have done to preserve the least Footsteps of Morality. But to examine the Truth of the Conjecture, under



under the Instance he has given, that of the *Indian*. Indeed it's very notorious the Regions of the *Indian* World are reduced to the lowest Ebb of Humanity, and lodged under the grossest Cloud of Ignorance, there being not much left but Humane Shape to introduce a Thinking Mind to believe they are endued with Humane Souls. But as for those small Remains of Morality, were they to submit to a strict Examination, I'm perswaded, we should hardly find them Resolving 'em into the Advice or Commands of their Fathers and Grandfathers, or pretending a Succession from the great Parent of Mankind, *Adam*. This is certainly an Account as unknown and unthought of, as native Inscriptions, or a *Rationale* founded in a large train of Consequences. But yet tho' 'tis ridiculous to imagine that such illiterate Mortals should resolve every Term or Notion into its Simple Ideas, (especially such as a late Author has projected) yet I do not question, but they would offer at something from the Intrinsic Nature of the things themselves, that would determine and engage their Choices; something that would in some measure bespeak them Men, and Reasonable Creatures. I will grant that

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Opinion as well as Practice may be often established upon Custom and publick Example, without accounting for the Nature, or Reason of the Things themselves. But then Custom conducts us to some Original that is not very remote, where we may find it established on the highest Convictions and Evidences of Reason; and it may be no less than what are sufficient to establish a Law of Nature. But it seems highly absurd, that the whole Body of Laws of Nature, or the indispensable Rules of Action to Mankind, should rest upon no other Foundation, but a few Instructions delivered to our First Parents; and these transmitted thro' all the Periods of Time, and all the Revolutions of States, and Kingdoms into all the Corners of the Earth, upon the voluntary Reports of those that lived before us. As for the Case of the poor *Indians*, I'm abundantly satisfied, they are so little sensible of any Conveyance of this Nature, and such insuperable Obstructions against the Success, or Preservation of it; that they might, on this account, justly plead invincible Ignorance to every Law of Nature, and consequently free themselves from that severe Sentence of *Perishing without Law*, because they really Sinned with

*there are*

without the least Apprehension, or *Conscience of a Law*. Thus far as to the Improbability of the Conveyance by Oral Tradition.

§. 2. I shall, in the second place, offer something, as to the Truth of the Position, that Laws of Nature take their Rise from Revelation.

And first, I think it manifestly contradicts the revealed *Canon*. And for this, I shall refer this Reverend Author to the Arguments I have advanced from Scripture, and particularly to the Passage he has cited, and my Explication pursuant to the whole Body of Commentators, and the best Modern Divines upon it. Indeed, he would make the World believe, he has taken off the Force of it, and established his own Notion by a parallel Text of Scripture: *And these Words, which I command thee this Day, shall be in thine Heart, and thou shalt Teach them diligently to thy Children, &c. Deut. 6. v. 6, 7.* Whereas, it's manifest, the holy Spirit speaks of Laws Revealed and Recorded, and the writing in the Heart implies nothing but a treasuring 'em up in the Mind, a Commitment of them to the Memory; and, in a Word, nothing but

but what the blessed Mother of our Lord did on another Occasion, when she *laid up his heavenly Sayings in her Heart*. It expresses a Duty incumbent upon us to commit the Laws of God to our Minds and Consciences, to rivet 'em in our Hearts and Affections, so to Meditate upon them, that we may perform and keep them, and instruct others in them. But the Epistle to the *Romans* expresses a quite different thing. It expresses a Law distinct from a Revealed Law, and fixes the Distinction in the different manner of Promulgation, on the Tables of the Heart; so that if 'tis not done by native Inscriptions, it must by natural Powers and Faculties. But further, the Canon of Scripture does not only pronounce this Notion false and groundless, but, I presume, it has been in some measure demonstrated to be so. For, if Man is originally endued with such Faculties, as by a native Activity can exert 'emselfes in the Discovery of Laws of Nature, there can be no Foundation for erecting an uncertain Scheme of Oral Tradition.

§. 3. But to proceed to the Consequences of this Position.

And

And first, It's very well known, the Patrons of this Notion directly overturn the received Distinctions of Natural, from Revealed Religion, and Natural from Positive Laws. The Distinction was always founded in the different Origin of these Laws. The latter being given by special Revelation, but the former discovered by the Workings of Natural Reason. But now both must derive from Revelation; and consequently there can be no other Distinction, but what may be among written Revealed Laws: in as much as one Revealed Law or Precept, in its Intrinsic Nature, may be better adapted to the View and Perception of Humane Understanding than others; or at least no other Distinction, but what lies between Oral, and Written Traditions.

But to conclude this Argument, This Notion seems to shake or overturn the eternal Distinctions of Moral Good and Evil, founded in the very Frame and Nature of Things, together with the OEconomy of Natural Conscience. For, it's manifest, it weakens the Authority of Natural Religion, by placing such important Laws and Precepts upon the slender Credit of Oral Traditions. Indeed there are so many Difficulties and Im-

Improbabilities in transmitting a Body of Laws, through all Parts of the Habitable World, by Oral Traditions, as are sufficient to ruine the Credit of the Hypothesis; and when this is done, the Latitudinarian has the greatest Advantage given him, to resolve the Whole of Natural Religion into *Custom* and *Education*: These are Considerations so obvious and clear, as might have given an early Check to the Notion, unless more cogent Arguments and Authorities had discovered themselves, than have been hitherto produced. However, now, I presume, they may obtain their due Effect, and though they have been offered with a great deal of Freedom, yet I hope this will not obstruct their Admission, where they carry an Evidence sufficient to make way for it.

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C H A P. V.

*Of the Distinction of Laws of Nature from Positive, or Written Laws, and whether they are Innate.*

§. 1. **I** Proceed, in the next place, to fix the Distinction of Laws of Nature, from Positive, or Written Laws, and consider whether they are Innate or no.

And first, The Distinction of Laws of Nature from Laws which, in the strictest Sense, pass under the Name of Revealed, is clearly visible. For in Laws of Nature, as well the Subject-matter, as the Authority of the Law, or the Mind, and Intention of the Law-giver upon it, are discoverable by the Powers and Faculties of Natural Reason. Whereas, in Revealed Laws, (I mean such as in the highest Sense are stiled Revealed) both the Subject-matter, and Intention of the Law-giver, entirely depend on the express Will and Pleasure of God. If  
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there's any Difficulty then, it will consist in fixing the precise Distinction between them, and Human Laws. For its certain both are to be esteemed the Deductions and Decrees of Right Reason. But, I think, they are chiefly to be distinguished from the Subject-matter of them. It's indeed the Work of Natural Reason to discover, and fix the Subject-matter of these Laws; but the Subject-matter of Laws of Nature is often vastly different from that of Civil Laws: For the Subject-matter of Laws of Nature arising from the original Frame and Condition of our Natures, and for the most part immediately conducing to our very Beings or Subsistence, rather than Well-being or civil Happiness, it seems to carry a natural and intrinsic Goodness; and consequently an irresistibile Force and Efficacy in it, abstracting from the Authority, or Injunctions of a Law-giver. But now the Subject-matter of Civil Laws being chiefly the Circumstantial, or Instruments of the improved Happiness, of particular Societies; and calculated for the particular Genius and Tempers of Men under different Climates, as well as the particular Turns and Periods of Kingdoms and Governments; it often



carries no Intrinsic Goodness in it, but is justly to be rank'd among Things indifferent; till the Pleasure and Authority of the Law-giver passes upon it. Again, the Subject-matter of Civil Laws, is extremely variable; whereas that of Laws of Nature seems to be perpetual and unalterable. For since the Subject-matter of Laws of Nature results from the primitive Frame and Order of created Nature, or indeed, from the original Frame of Humane Nature, as it stands encompassed with common Wants and Necessities; it must necessarily be adapted to the whole Off-spring of Mankind, and consequently be as perpetual as universal. But now the Subject-matter of Humane Laws being only the Circumstantials of civil Happiness, advanced as a fit and proper Instrument to attain it in particular Communities and Societies of Men, it must needs be precarious and changeable; it's often calculated for particular Events and Emergencies, and consequently is as various as the different Aspects, or Revolutions of Kingdoms. It's an Instrument often advanced for a particular, and temporary End and Design, and it's well known there may be Twenty Instruments of equal force to attain it; and

consequently the Subject-matter of Humane Laws is often no otherwise fix'd and determin'd, than by the arbitrary Decree or Sentence of the Law-giver. But further, in order to establish a true Distinction of Laws of Nature from positive Humane Laws; let us consider what it is that seems to give 'em the Denomination of Laws of Nature, and represents 'em as Innate Rules, or Principles.

And First, since it is concluded, that they result, or take their rise from the very Frame and Constitution of created Nature, (inasmuch, that God having established the Frame and Order of Things, these Laws, without any positive Command, must follow upon it; and consequently in one Act seems to have established both) they may be justly esteemed Laws of Nature. And this may be one principal Reason why they carry the appearance of Innate Principles, and in the sacred *Canon* are represented to us as such. In this Sense, I'm sure, they are sufficiently distinguish'd from Humane Laws, since they are so far from taking their rise in the Frame and Constitution of Nature, that they are, at best, but remote Deductions from Laws of Nature, or rather certain temporary Rules and Provisions

visions of Reason advanced upon particular Emergencies in conformity to Laws of Nature, or, at least, an arbitrary enforcement of Laws of Nature by positive Rewards and Punishments. But further, that which in reality gives them the appearance of Innate Principles and the denomination of Laws of Nature, is the evidence and perspicuity of 'em. For since it is concluded, that Laws of Nature result from the very Frame and Order of Nature, from that state and condition of Things wherein we were born, and whereby we subsist; they must undoubtedly discover 'emselfes to the Minds of Men, even tho' they were lodged in the most simple and unimproved State of Nature. For as long as we allow Mankind to be Thinking Reasoning Beings, the desire of Self-preservation will direct 'em to those Laws, without the observance of which they can hardly pretend to subsist, much less be happy. In a word, they are Laws of Nature, because they are Impressions that are stamped on the Mind, from the most importunate cravings and exigencies of Nature; and they carry the appearance of Innate Principles, because they are certainly some of the first Suggestions that accompany a Mind af-

ter its arrived to a State of Thinking, and left to consult the Safety and Preservation of the whole Man: I say they are certainly some of the first Suggestions that would naturally offer 'emselfes to the Minds of Men. For tho' Mankind is brought forth in Impotence, and their Mind cultivated by Education, as their Bodies are cherished by Food and Raiment, till they arrive to a competent Strength and Vigor, and consequently Names, and Words, and Ideas of the most trite Objects of Sense are instilled by the Instructions of Nurses and Parents, yet could we suppose Men turned out into the World in a State of Maturity, without the Bias of Education upon 'em, I do not question but the very Frame and Condition of their Beings, together with the Desire of Self-preservation, would give 'em a speedy View of those Laws, which, for this Reason, are justly stiled Laws of Nature. Again, they are Laws of Nature; because they immediately fall in with some peculiar Propensions; wrought off with the original Frame and Constitution of our Natures. It's visible there are certain Instincts, or Impulses in Nature, which seem to exert 'emselfes upon particular Actions, that cannot well  
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be resolved into the elaborate Workings of Reason, for they seem to have engaged the Passions by a kind of influential Impulse before the Action can well be scanned by any deliberate Reasonings; and certainly nothing strikes the Passions sooner, than those Actions that are prescribed by Laws of Nature. Thus the receipt of Benefits creates a speedy exultation, the cherishing of our own Off-spring leaves a vigorous Complacency, and the most grateful Applauses and Satisfactions. And truly these are Things that have discovered 'emselfes so early, where Nature has not been new moulded by contrary Habits, or Education, that I do not question but they have given a Foundation to pronounce Laws of Nature, natural Instincts, or Innate Doctrines, or Principles. To conclude this Argument, Another distinguishing Characteristick of Laws of Nature from Civil Laws, arises from the exercise of Reason in the discovery of 'em. It's on all hands allowed, that Reason is the immediate Directory in Civil Laws, as well as Laws of Nature. But yet Reason acts in a very different manner. For the Foundation of Laws of Nature being the common exigencies, necessities, or condition of Man-

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kind, as Men, or such an Order of Beings; Reason can easily fix such Rules as will extend to the whole Species, so as to carry a binding Authority over 'em. But the Foundation of Civil Laws being only some particular Emergencies to be considered with regard to some particular Circumstances of Time, Place, Persons and the like; Reason cannot determine any thing absolutely, or fix a general Rule, or, indeed, declare what is fit and convenient in every Community; and consequently Civil Laws can only be the Deductions of Reason in Civil Governments, with regard to the State and Condition of their People, or Government where they preside.

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C H A P. VI.

*Reflections on Mr. Lock's Arguments against Innate Ideas, or Practical Principles; and the true Controversy determined,*

§. I. **H**AVING thus assigned the principal Characteristicks of Laws of Nature, we may in a few Words determine, whether there be any practical Principles, which are truly Innate: But before I shall conclude any thing, I shall take liberty to make some few Returns to the Arguments of a late Author on this Subject. [*Mr. Lock's Essay concerning Human Understanding.*] And first, concerning Universal Consent. It's indisputably evident, that Universal Consent does not prove any Ideas, or practical Principles to be Innate. Because an Universal Consent may prevail, partly from that Self-evidence, that naturally results from particular Things, or Actions, when presented to the Minds of Men; and partly from the Frame and Condition of

Human Nature ; whereby we are forcibly prompted to the disquisition of 'em. But yet we are not willing wholly to discard the Argument ; because tho' Universal Consent may not prove the Doctrine of Innate Ideas ; yet it's certainly a considerable Argument of a Law of Nature. And tho' the Author of this Essay has done all he could to ruine the Credit and Authority of it, yet I hope I have proved there is such a thing as Universal Consent, established upon a very firm and clear Foundation. But further, the remaining Arguments of this Author are chiefly advanced against Innate Ideas, but they appear with equal force against Innate practical Principles. And therefore I shall remark a little on that which he seems to fix the greatest weight on ; and that is, a Necessity of Perception, even in a State of Infancy ; *for to him it seems a Contradiction, or hardly intelligible, that Truths should be imprinted on the Soul which it perceives or understands not.* Sect. 5. p. 5. See pag. 13. Sect. 27. But certainly he cannot mean a Necessity of actual Perception. For the Finite Nature of a Human Mind, will not in the same Instant suffer many Objects to be received under an actual View ; and com-  
mon



mon experience informs us, that a great many Impressions, or Ideas, are lodged in the Memory, without being revived it may be for a succession of Years. And truly I can see no reason, why native Inscriptions may not remain without being actually attended to, as well as written Laws, or acquir'd Ideas. It's well known, those that contend for Innate Ideas, or Principles, do not think they discover themselves without the Exercise of our natural Powers and Faculties; and some of those external Means and Instruments that are necessary to acquired Knowledge.

In a word, they always suppose a due Attention and Application of Mind, even to the Exercise of Reflection. And truly since acquired Impressions, that are laid up in the Memory, are scarce ever revived, but by an accidental Occurrence of some present Object; these native Inscriptions (if any such) may not be perceived till their respective Objects are presented to the Mind, to exert its Powers and Faculties upon. Something like this our Exercitations on written Laws seem to resemble, when we never apprehend the full Force and Purport of a Law, till some special Case or Instance offers itself to induce an Application,  
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And thus the want of Perception in Infants may be fairly accounted for ; as well as from the infant Indispositions of the Animal part : For the Organs being (for ought we know) at first not so well fitted to convey the Images of outward Objects, and consequently fix any Impressions, or establish any clear Perceptions, no wonder if native Inscriptions lie dormant. This Author allows, there's a time when a Human Soul begins to Think, or exercise any of its natural Powers and Faculties ; and native Inscriptions cannot occur, or be perceived before we begin to Think ; yea, rather if they are to be revived by the Exercise of the Mind, upon outward Things or Objects that are peculiar to 'em ; we can scarce expect 'em among our infant Thoughts, or mental Exercitations, as long as we are so constantly entertained by the Inventions of Nurses and Parents. Thus far there seems to be no necessity for discarding innate Ideas or practical Principles ; and consequently, if it appears that the Doctrine serves any real Purposes of Religion, I see nothing advanced by this Author that demonstrates the Absurdity of it.

§ 2. But yet for all this, if it be allowed that Probabilities may determine our Judgments in this Matter, the Doctrine of Innate Ideas, is rather to be rejected than retain'd. It's abundantly concluded, That Man is under an establish'd Method of attaining the right knowledge of Good and Evil; the Frame and Order of Things within and without, with the exercise of his own Faculties upon 'em, will present him with a Scheme of Moral Duty, and a true Measure of Action; and that too as clearly as if it was impressed on the Mind, with the first Lineaments of its Being: And therefore there seems to be no visible Necessity for having Recourse to Innate Ideas, or Instructions. And certainly, if Innate Ideas are serviceable to Mankind, they must be so in order to supply the Defects of Reason, and consequently, they seem to be exempt from the Disquisitions of Reason. For if Innate Ideas are to be examined and judg'd on by the Workings of Reason, Reason itself, (I mean the Decrees and Deductions of it,) will answer all the Ends and Designs of a reasonable Being as effectually, as if a Digest of Laws were originally recorded on the Mind.

Mind. If this be true, as I think it's, in some measure, demonstrated to be, the Doctrine of Innate Principles must be laid aside, since we cannot conceive that a wise Creator should establish any Ordinance, without some special Ends and Uses annexed to it, I mean such, as are not served any other way. If it be said, that Reason exercises no Jurisdiction in this Affair; then, I'm afraid, Innate Inscriptions will rather endamage than advance Religion and Morality. For then every one will be apt to obtrude his own Fancies, and wild Suggestions, for native Inscriptions; and consequently, Mankind must be exposed to all the Extravagancies of Enthusiasm, in the OEconomy of Nature, as well as that of Grace; so that whatsoever any one has the boldness to affirm, or fancy to be written on the Heart, must immediately pass an Obligation on all Mens Actions; and the Finger of God shall be pleaded to the Subversion of the common Principles of Morality, as the Spirit of God has been to the Subversion of the Peace and Unity of the Church. When all things then are thus fairly laid together, we may with greater appearance of Reason, conclude, That our Ideas and Principles are acquired,

red, as well as the more remote Deductions of Science, and that 'tis their intimate Agreement with the Ends and Interests, or common Frame and Necessity of our Nature, that gives 'em the appearance of native Impressions. In a word, then, tho' the sacred Language seems to favour the Notion, yet it may be justly resolved into Metaphor, or Figure, and import no more than an Allusion to the general Custom of promulging Laws in Tables, or Writing. Inasmuch as God has originally endued us with Powers and Faculties to discover a Rule of Action, and Law to Govern ourselves by, in the common Exigences of Human Nature, as clearly as if he had Engraven it on Tables of Stone.

CHAPTER

## C H A P. VII.

*Of the different Degrees of the Evidence of Laws of Nature.*

**I**T will easily be granted, that Laws of Nature carry a different Evidence, in proportion to the Subject-matter of 'em, and the several Workings of Reason, in the Disquisition of 'em. Some Laws discover 'emselfes by a single Consequence, or a short train of Consequences, whilst others rest upon an Evidence, that is wrought by several Gradations, or a large Series of Consequences or Deductions. The primary Laws of Nature are those which represent the principal Duties we owe to God, or those which concern our own Persons, or the Persons of our Neighbours. For those that arise from our own, or our Neighbours Property, are certainly more elaborate and remote. I shall illustrate these Observations by a single Instance in each of 'em.

And first, To Reverence and Worship the Supreme Being, which we call God, is certainly a Fundamental Law of Nature ;

ture; because it necessarily arises from that Relation we bear to God. For the most obvious Notion of a God, and a bare Assent to this single Proposition, that God is our Creator, and we his Creatures, from whom all that we have, or belongs to us, is immediately derived, must by a direct and immediate Consequence demonstrate, that we are obliged to empty our Souls before him in the most solemn Acts of Homage and Reverence. Indeed, as for the manner of Divine Worship, tho' Natural Reason, by a train of Arguments, might determine it, so as to be some way acceptable to God; yet to establish it in Perfection, is certainly the business of Revealed Religion: But that God is to be Worshipped, is a Duty lodged in the most simple Workings of Reason. Again, That God has enjoined Temperance, as a Duty, arises not only from the prime and most obvious Ends of our Being, but from the Doctrine of Self-preservation, and the necessary Methods of Subsistence; so that allowing the clear Dictates of Reason, in the Mind of our great Creator, to be a Rule of Duty, a single Inference will demonstrate Temperance to be a Duty. Again, as to those Laws which concern the  
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Person of our Neighbours; such I mean as prohibit Murder, or other Violations of their Persons, it's visible, the Consideration of the Methods of our Subsistence, whereby we are necessitated to rely on the Succours of our Fellow-creatures, will instruct us that God did not allow us to assassinate and destroy 'em; the very Suggestions of Self-preservation will oblige us to make the Conclusion. Again, the Consideration of being Fellow-creatures, and a peculiar of a Sovereign Creator, and as such under his immediate Conduct and Disposal, will instruct us, that we have no right to their Lives, without a special Commission from him.

Lastly, The early Discoveries which we find in ourselves, of Love, Tenderness, and Compassion, and the Earnings which are implanted towards our own Flesh and Blood, will direct us that God intended we should place a certain Measure of these native Passions and Propensions on those that are descended from us, or are compounded of the same Ingredients, and formed in the same Mould; and consequently he could never authorize us to commit Violence or Cruelties on their Persons; so absurd is the Hypothesis of the *Lexington*, that projects a State of Nature



ture to be an absolute State of War. But to proceed to the last Instance, that of outward Goods and Possessions, which engages the principal Laws and Measures of Justice. Thus to Steal, is, no doubt, a Violation of natural Justice, and consequently a Violation of a Law of Nature; but yet this rests on the Force and Authority of a Law antecedent to it, I mean that of Property; and consequently it implies several Conclusions or Deductions, before we discover the Authority or Obligation of it. Thus to detain or invade a Neighbour's Property, contrary to Compact, is certainly an Act of Violence done to a Law of Nature; but yet it demands a Proof of the Obligations of Compact or voluntary Promises, as well as of the Authority of Property, before the Law can be decyphered. It cannot be denyed but these are Laws of Nature, because natural Reason, by close Researches and regular Conclusions, may discover their Obligations. I'm sure it can be no Objection, that they result from voluntary Intercourses and Transactions among Mankind, I mean Compacts or Bargains; for the Necessities of Nature, dictating such Transactions, is a sufficient Indication of their Divine

Authority and Obligation; and consequently, whatever immediately Results from 'em, must obtain the same Authority and Obligation, as well as Character: But yet, it's manifest, when Laws of Nature are to be supported by a Train of Consequences, the Evidence is not so direct and convincing; because in these Cases the Mind is more fatally exposed to Miscarriages. Upon the whole then it appears, that Laws of Nature rest upon very different Degrees of Evidence. And now thus much being agreed and concluded, it may by these Measures be more exactly discerned which are to be esteemed Laws of Nature, and which not so; which Fundamental, or *de primo Dictamine Natura*, and which not so; and consequently, the Necessity of forming a compleat Scheme of Laws of Nature, seems to be wholly superseeded.

C H A P.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Foundation of God's Right  
of Dominion, and our Duty of  
Allegiance as a Law-giver.

§. I. **H**AVING asserted the Authority  
of Laws of Nature, by fix-  
ing it in the Author of Nature, it natu-  
rally directs me to enquire into the Ori-  
ginal and Foundation of those Obligati-  
ons we owe to God, or how we are obli-  
ged to the Observance of his Laws. But  
before I proceed to a direct Determinati-  
on of this Matter, I shall make some Re-  
turns to what I find in a late excellent  
Discourse, concerning the Power and  
Right of Obliging, and particularly as  
applied to God. He labours to prove  
that the Right and Power of Obliging is  
the same, especially with respect to God;  
and therefore after a great many Argu-  
ments concludes, *From all which it follows  
that wherever there is a Right of Obliging,  
and where there is an absolute uncontroul-  
able Power of Obliging, there is for that ve-*

*ry reason a Right also, [See The Certainty and Necessity of Religion in general, Page 100.]* Whether these Assertions are true or no will appear by and by.

First, I cannot but Premise, that Right and Power happening to accompany each other in the Exercise of 'em, no more than Heat and Light in the Sun, is no Argument that they are not two distinct things, conceived under two distinct Ideas or Notions.

Secondly, Tho' a Right and Power of Obliging, are both eternally invested in God, yet it's no more an Argument that they imply the same thing, than that the Attributes of Infinite Power and Justice are the same. Nay, further, tho' a Right of Obliging may by a Train of Consequences follow from a Power of Obliging, or on the contrary, a Power of Obliging from a Right of Obliging; yet it's no more an Argument of their Identity, than that a rational Soul and Thought are the same, because a rational Soul implies a Power of Thinking. And, therefore, tho' an absolute uncontrollable Power may infer a Right of Obliging, so that for that very Reason there may be a Right of Obliging, yet they may be as distinct as Power and Truth.

Truth: But to consider both in their received and established Ideas or Notions: Now certainly, were we to appeal not only to the best Moralists, but to the common Sense of Mankind, they would unanimously concur in two different Descriptions. And I'm perswaded they differ as much as a Raparee or Tyrant, from a lawful Prince; as much as doing a thing Rightfully, or upon a just Authority, and doing a thing by Violence. For Violence argues a Power of Punishing, as well as a rightful Execution of Punishment; both indeed attain the same end, that is, engage an Obedience, but upon different Measures and Principles. A Power of Obliging, in the strict Notion of it, is only concerned for securing an Obedience, without considering the Justice or Injustice of the Action; but a Right of Obliging implies an Obedience established on a just Authority or Foundation; if there be any such thing as Justice distinct from Power.

In a word, A Right of Obliging implies the Title of a Superior to Obedience, and consequently, a Title to enforce it by suitable Rewards and Punishments; but a Power of Obliging neither implies a Title to the one nor other.

Thus an Usurper may have as absolute a Command of Rewards and Punishments, to oblige or secure an Obedience, as the most rightful Sovereign; yet he certainly wants an Authority to enforce an Obedience, by the Weight and Terror of Punishment; and if he doth enforce it, he exercises Power, but not Right.

Again, A rightful Sovereign may retain a Title to an Obedience, and to the Exercise of Rewards and Punishments to enforce it, but he may want a Power to exert his Right, as in the Case of Rebellion or general Defection. The Notion is clear and indisputable, when applied to the civil Power on Earth, and it carries the same Evidence and Force in it, when applied to the absolute independent Power of Heaven: For the Power and Right, by reason of the infinite Perfections of the Divine Nature, are Inseparable in God, and in Man not so; yet the Ideas, or Notions of Right and Power, whether in God or Men, are formed upon the same Measures and Principles; yea, as much as the Notions of Justice, Reason, or Purity, allowing Infinity and Perfection in God, which cannot be given to Men.

§. 2. Having thus far asserted the Distinction of a *Right of Obliging* from a *Power of Obliging*, I shall proceed a little further, and consider whether the *Right of Obliging*, as a true and proper Law-giver, consists in nothing else but in a *Power of contributing to our Happiness or Misery*, by special Rewards or Punishments. Thus much seems to be asserted in the Discourse already cited; for we are told, *That no one has a Right or Power of Obliging another to act such a particular Way he prescribes, any further than he has a Power of contributing to the Happiness or Misery of that Being he so Prescribes to, — and that God can no otherwise induce an Obligation upon Men to Obey him, than by making 'em know that he has it in his Power, to render them Happy or Miserable,* Page 95.

But certainly, that a *Right of Obliging*, as a Law-giver, does not consist in a *Power of Rewarding and Punishing*, is evident from uncontrollable Arguments.

As first, It cannot be denied but an Equal, that can challenge no *Right of Dominion* over us, may, upon some special Circumstances, be invested with such a *Power of Rewarding and Punishing*, as

to engage us to Pursue and Imbrace what he dictates to us; and yet such a Power does not give him any Right of Dominion over us, or induce an Obligation of obeying him as a proper Superior. A Friend may propose Rewards to determine us to any particular Way in Matters of Counsel or Interest, and yet not induce a binding Authority upon us, like that of a Law. A Friend or Neighbour may, by Rewards or Favours, be empowered to contribute so highly to our Happiness, as to induce not only Obligations of Gratitude, but the Exercise of other social Vertues, and yet they do not establish a Right of Sovereign Authority upon us.

In a word, A Robber, Usurper, Assassin, or the Devil himself may have it in his Power to inflict such Punishments as will determine any Man to Act as he prescribes, and yet this Power gives no Right or Title to our Obedience, no more than a Right to inflict those Punishments that will enforce it. It will easily be granted, that a Power of Punishing or Rewarding, and consequently of contributing to our Happiness or Misery, are the only proper Motives of a rational Obedience, but I cannot conceive how they



they can be the Ground of Obedience that is due to a Superior. For nothing can be the Ground of Obedience, but such a Dependence as entitles a Being to impose things upon us by way of Precept or Command, and authorises him to inflict Punishments when his Commands are not fulfilled or executed, so that the Ground or Obligation of Obedience, due to Laws, is antecedent to a Power of Rewarding or Punishing; since it must not give *only* Right to a Power of imposing Precepts or Commands; but to a Power of inflicting Punishments. Indeed the Miscarriages of this Notion, seem to arise by not distinguishing the Ground of Obedience, from its proper Motives. I will easily grant, that few would be persuaded to yield an Obedience to Commands, that are disagreeable to any thing about them, were there no Power of contributing to their Happiness or Misery, by Rewards or Punishments; and therefore nothing can more effectually engage an actual Obedience, with the Dissolute and Irreligious, than a Power of contributing to their Happiness or Misery, by Rewards or Punishments; but I cannot think that a bare Power of dispensing Rewards or Punishments, can represent the

the Right of Obedience, or in the Language of this Author, *the Right of Obliging another*; no more than the Right of Dispensing those Rewards or Punishments we have in our Power. This is an Assertion that carries so much Evidence in it, that it holds every way: For were any Subject placed in such Circumstances, that neither Rewards nor Punishments were left to oblige him to yield an Obedience, yet he may for all this, acknowledge his Superior's Right to his Obedience. Thus in the Case of a general Defection, tho' the Rightful Sovereign is divested of a Power of Rewarding and Punishing, the Rebels enjoying an absolute Possession of both; yet their Ambition, Revenge, or Success may not carry 'em to such a pitch of Insolence, but they may still be forced secretly to own their Sovereign's Right to their Allegiance, as well as Right to that Power of dispensing Rewards and Punishments, which they have wrested from him, and particularly a Right of Punishment due to their unnatural Defection.

Again, I question not but the very Devils in Hell, tho' they know and feel the irreverfible Sentence passed against 'em, and consequently have no Motive left  
to

to engage their Obedience, are forced to recognize their Fealty, or acknowledge God's Right of Dominion over them, in obliging 'em to serve and obey him; and his Right in passing that very Sentence they actually suffer for not obeying him. For in this Sense they certainly *believe and tremble*, inasmuch that their very Belief seems to be an Instrument to enhance their Misery.

To conclude this Argument, I can freely grant, that there cannot be a Right of Obliging without a Right of Rewarding or Punishing, because (as has already been observed) the Right of Rewarding or Punishing is founded in a Right of Obliging; but there may be a Power of Rewarding and Punishing, without a Right of Rewarding, much less of Obliging. In one word, the recognizing a Right of Obliging, or a Title to Obedience, is only an Assent of the Mind to a particular Truth; and tho' the Power of Rewarding or Punishing are the only proper Arguments to secure an Obedience, yet I hope there may be other Reasons or Arguments to engage this Assent besides the Power of Rewarding or Punishing, or of contributing to our Happiness.

§. 3. Having thus offered my Reasons why I Dissent from this Author, before I determine wherein the Right of Obliging consists, I shall offer something against Mr. Hobbs's Notion. He, indeed, carries the thing somewhat higher, for he peremptorily affirms, That the Right of God's Sovereign Authority over Mankind, rests merely upon his irresistible Power; *a secula potentia irresistibili*, De Cive, cap. 14, 15. And to confirm the Notion, he further affirms, That one Man might have challenged a Right over the whole Offspring of Mankind, had he been endued with a Sufficiency of Power to have resisted the united Force of his Fellow-Creatures, or, at least, protected them and himself. *Mansisset igitur ipse jus domini in ceteros omnes propter potentiam excessum qua & se & illos conservare potuisset*. Pursuant to this, he tells us §. 7. That our Obligations of Obedience are founded in our native Impotence and Fear, *et metu siue Imbecillitatis propria (respectu Divine potentia) conscientia*. I must confess, there seems to be a near Affinity between this and the Notion already excepted against, tho' this seems to be carried much further, and more palpably beyond the Mark.

Mark. For that admits a Power of Rewarding, as well as Punishing, and consequently includes an Obedience mixed with Love as well as Fear; but this fixes all upon the Power of Punishing, and consequently places all upon Fear, or some Glymptes of Hope, without any foundation for Love. Indeed this is a Notion which deserves rather Contempt and Scorn than a formal Reply. For it levels us with the unthinking Brutes that perish, by making Fear, and that too the most servile part of it, a fear of Punishment, the only Spring of Human Actions. This, we see, is the Sovereign Principle of his Religion, as well as Politicks, but it has been more than once learnedly confuted, as concerned in the latter; and it's so absur'd as applyed to the former, that it scarce deserves the least Notice, much less a Confutation. I shall therefore dismiss this Notion with a few Observations.

First, It's observable, that the Arguments brought to support it, are directed to prove the proper Motive of our Obedience; not God's Right and Sovereignty to it; or, in other terms, to enforce an Obedience, not to represent the Right or Duty of Obedience.

Secondly, It is observable, that Arguments suggested against the last Notion, must carry an equal Force against this. But, in a word, I think no considering Person can discern any Consequence between a bare Power of punishing a Sett of Men, and a Right of imposing Laws and demanding Obedience to 'em; and if 'tis false in a finite Power, it must be so in infinite; for there is no difference besides original and delegated, infinite and limited, neither of which alter the nature of Things, Notions or Consequences; so, that infinite Power in punishing as such, or, as it barely implies, an infinite Power or Ability to punish, no more gives the Idea or Denomination of a Right of punishing (much less a Right of imposing Laws) than a finite delegated Power doth.

§. 4. It remains, that I endeavour to represent, wherein the precise Nature of a rightful Dominion, Obligation, or Obedience, with respect to God and his Laws, consists. And I shall enlarge something more freely upon it, because all delegated Right of Dominion and Obedience entirely depends upon it. Thus if we suppose civil Government founded in Compact,

part, the Right of Dominion and Obedience must rest upon the Authority of Compacts, as 'tis a Law of Nature, and an indispensable Duty to Observe and keep 'em; but the observance of 'em cannot be an indispensable Duty, but by some Right and Authority, lodged in the Author of Nature, that pronounces 'em such. Thus if civil Government takes its Rise from a Paternal Right, Conquest, Immemorial Prescription, or Possession, the Right of Dominion or Obedience invested in the civil Power, must rest on the Authority of some Divine Law, either natural or revealed, ratifying or confirming their Claims or Titles; and the Authority of this Law must rest on some Right which God challenges to impose such a Law; so that the Authority of every sort of rightful earthly Power is founded in a Divine Right, in vertue of which, it is stiled *the Ordinance of God*; since all their Right of Dominion, or Authority, derives from a Supereminent Right in God. Now this is an absolute Demonstration of the Absurdity of the *Hobbiſts* Notion, that Matters of Religion receive their Obligation from the State or civil Power, and consequently induce an absolute Obedience: This puts an eternal

Silence to the Dispute, Whether we are to yield an Obedience to the Laws of the State before the Laws of God, or whether the Laws of the State are to be obeyed against the Laws of God? For certainly, since God is the Fountain of all Power and Authority, the Duties of Religion are ultimately determined by God, as well as receive their Obligation from God; so that the civil Power, that derives all Authority from God, can only exert a Power in matters of Religion, where God has not interposed, or placed it in other hands; but it's the greatest Absurdity in Nature to pretend a supereminent Power to that of God, when the whole any Man can pretend to immediately derives from God.

But to return: First then, the true Original of God's Right of Dominion, or Right of Obliging us, undoubtedly results from his creative and preserving Power. That that Being, which by an absolute independent Power gives Being to another, has a Right to give Laws, or fix the Measures and Rules of his Being, seems to be a Maxim that carries a kind of Self-evidence in it; I'm sure it's the very Argument advanced in the Sacred Canon, *Rom. 9. 20, 21. Nay, but O Man, who*



art thou that repliest against God? Shall  
 the thing formed say to him that formed it,  
 why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the  
 Potter power over the Clay, of the same lump  
 to make one Vessel unto Honor, and another  
 unto Dishonor? It's well known, the De-  
 sign of the Argument is to represent a  
 supereminent Right in God, even such as  
 might justly authorise him to assign those  
 Allotments to Mankind, which his infi-  
 nite Goodness would never suffer him to  
 execute, and consequently it must de-  
 monstrate a Right of giving Laws to  
 those Creatures to whom he gave a Be-  
 ing. But to pursue the Argument upon  
 the Reasons of it, It's on all Hands allow-  
 ed, that a Right of Dominion is founded  
 in Property, and the more absolute the  
 Property is, the more unquestionable is  
 the Right of Dominion. That Property  
 is the Foundation of Obedience, or (a  
 Right of Obliging, both in respect of  
 God and Men, this Author freely owns  
 in another place, pag. 126. And yet he  
 labours to wave it in the place before us,  
 as will appear more fully by and by. His  
 Concessions are these, *All the Reasons and  
 Grounds of our Obedience to Men, and of  
 their Right of Obliging us, are Power, Good-  
 ness and Property—* But God has all these

*Titles to our Obedience in the highest degree possible, for by giving us our entire Being, and every thing that belongs to our Nature, 'tis plain, that he has a greater Property in us by this Act of Creation or Production, than can accrue to any Man by Conquest, Purchase, Covenant, or any other way whereby Men come to have a Propriety in one another. I think the Argument is carried so full and clear, that it seems not capable of an Improvement. It's certain there is no Property so absolute as that which results from a creative preserving Power. For Creation makes the Property absolute, independent and unborrowed; every Spring and Movement, every Power or Faculty, every Interest or Happiness, either actually possess'd, or capable of being enjoy'd, is an absolute Property of a Creator; for all that is within or without us when he first set us forth into the World, was originally wrapped up, and in time issued forth of his infinite Power and Wisdom; the whole Stock of Materials came out from him, and when 'tis all returned back, he has but his own. And is it not lawful to do what one will with his own? Subordinate Proprietors indeed may be limited, as to the exercise, or use of what they have a Propriety in, but an*

an absolute independent Proprietor is to account to no one. We may therefore, in the Language of our Saviour, expostulate, *who shall give unto him that which is thus his own?* Luke 16. 12. Again, a preserving Power, especially such as is peculiar to God, seems to advance, or at least corroborate the Propriety he challenges in us. As our Beings took their rise from another, and were formed by the Hands of an Almighty Creator, we are by a necessity of Nature, or the original Frame and Condition of our Nature, Beings perpetually dependent, so that Reason, as well as Revelation, instructs us, that *in him we live, move, and have our Beings*. He did not form and bespeak us into Being, and after the finishing Stroke, put us wholly out of his Hands with an intrinsic Power of Self-subsistence; but the same Power concurs to continue our Beings, that was required to form us into Being, for every Breath of Life, even our very Soul, and that Reason which seems to give us Authority to act for ourselves, nay, the whole Cargo of Happiness, and every Span and Minute of it, perpetually hangs on the preserving Power of a mighty Creator. So that we may Expostulate in the Lan-

guage of an Apostle, *What hast thou that thou didst not receive?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. Especially since we have received nothing but what carries appearance of having not received it, in as much as it still rests on the preserving Power of the Donor. Now what can establish a Right of Dominion, or a Right of Obliging, if a Property so absolute, so independent, so inseparable, and so peculiar as this will not do it? Not only the uncontroverted Notions of Mankind, but the first Workings of Reason will subscribe to it. Can Reason disown that Right by which it moves, and acts, and subsists? Nay, to advance a little further, this Gentleman, in another place, ingenuously confesses, that there are certain natural Propensions or Dispositions in the Soul, that close in with particular Actions, before Reason can well exert it self, p. 122. And certainly the present Notion of a Right of Dominion, founded in a creative, preserving Power, will be immediately embraced by the same original Propensions; for I'm perswaded, could the Mind feel the Idea of such a Power upon her in an Instant, there would such an inward Impulse, like a natural Instinct, arise, that must discover a *tacit tremendous* kind of Assent to a Right

Right of Fealty and Allegiance, before Reason could draw forth into a thread of Arguments to induce it. Indeed, the Title to a Right of Dominion is so indisputable, that Reason cannot suggest any thing that can pretend to limit the exercise of it, besides God's own immense and unchangable Attributes and Perfections. And therefore, tho' I will not dispute the Power of God, whether he could give his Creatures such Laws as must make 'em eternally miserable, (for did his Power extend thus far, his infinite Wisdom, Purity and Goodness, must suspend the exercise of it) otherwise if these could admit of it, I can see nothing that we can have recourse to, either as our own, or from others, that could give Right or Foundation to dispute the Authority of 'em. The Nature and Tendency of 'em, might very well obstruct the Observance of 'em; but still there would be no real Foundation, exclusive of the Goodness and Purity of God, to cancel the Authority of 'em. However these may be Niceties, and therefore it's by no means material to adjust or settle 'em. It's abundantly sufficient, that a creative, preserving Power, is an ample Foundation to establish a Right of Do-

minion and Obligations of Obedience, with respect to those Laws which God at any time has enjoyed us, or his infinite Purity, Goodness, or Wisdom shall suffer him to enjoy us. For as long as his blessed Attributes and Perfections regulate the divine Decrees, there can be no Laws imposed, but what directly tend to the Happiness and welfare of his Creatures.

§. 5. But further, we may consider the creative Power of God, as in reality it is, an incomparable Blessing or Benefit. For we cannot imagin, but an act of Creation was an effect of infinite Wisdom and Goodness as well as Power. I'm sure the distinguishing Marks of Favour God has placed on Man, beyond the other parts of the Creation, in stamping him with his own Image, and framing him for a Life and Action like himself, abundantly demonstrate that infinite Goodness, conspired with infinite Power, in his first Production. It cannot then be denied, but a Fund of Benefits was raised in the first Principles of his Being: And certainly the first Notices of Reason instruct us, that Benefits imply an Obligation to Duty, and a Right in the Benefactor

benefactor to challenge it; and therefore unless God, after he had given us a Being, had done any thing to cancel that Interest which the Blessings of our Creation gave him in us, he has a Right to our Obedience, without the addition of new Favours or Rewards; and consequently a Power of contributing further to our Happiness, by dispensing fresh Rewards, cannot be required to establish a Right of Obliging. But I must freely confess, that the receipt of Benefits only induces an Obligation to make suitable Returns for what is received; when this is done, the Obligation ceases, and consequently it cannot infer such general Obligations of Obedience as are implied in a legillative Power, or a Power of imposing Laws. It's true, where there is a continued Succession of Benefits, and where the very Laws themselves bring in new Benefits, it must needs perpetuate our Obligations, and render 'em as universal as those that arise from a legillative Power. And this being the true Case between God and us, I mean in respect of his Laws, a Right of Duty and Obedience may be founded in that Fund of Benefits he has heaped on us. But yet this is a further Demonstration, that the

true and fundamental Right of Dominion and Obedience flows from God's creative Power, whereby he hath made us, and not we ourselves. And that this Argument of Benefits, and all others, concenter with, if not derive from it. In a word, this establisheth such an unquestionable Right of Dominion and Obedience, that were there no other to support it, it's alone sufficient to give the great Creator of the World a Right to Govern Mankind by Laws, and enforce the Observance of 'em by suitable Rewards and Punishments.

§. 6. It now remains, that I consider what is said by this Author, in Opposition to God's Right of Sovereignty from his creative Power: His Words are these, *It is not his great and supereminent Power in creating Men, and giving them Being, which is solely in itself the Ground and Foundation of his Title to their Obedience.* His Argument is, — *For was Misery the certain unalterable Condition of their Being without End or Decrease, how could the Author of their Being be imagined to oblige 'em to obey his Commands?* Now before I give a direct Answer, I cannot but remark that it seems to be disingenuous or unfair.



unfair to argue upon important Matters, by Suppositions that contradict the thing in Fact, that never were in Fact, and that involve a Complication of Absurdities that they ever should be so ; such I take to be the Creation of Man to an unalterable State of Misery without a Possibility of an End or Decrease ; for this Way of arguing often serves to confound rather than illustrate or discover Truth. But *2dly*, An Instance ought to have been assigned against the binding Authority of a creative Power, that implies a Power in God of contributing to our Happiness or Misery ; otherwise it concludes nothing against a creative Power as 'tis now established, no more than it advances his own Hypothesis. But if Man is created to an infinite and irreversibile State of Misery, then God has no longer a Power in this Case of contributing to his Happiness or Misery, and consequently can be no Argument against a Right of Dominion founded in a creative Power, that admits of infinite Rewards as well as Punishments. *3dly*, The Instance given, seems to discard Man from being the proper Subject of a Law ; For 'tis in vain to give Laws to a Being that is irreversibile and infinitely happy or miserable, since

since Laws in this Case can turn to no manner of End or Improvement; we may as well suppose a Man infinitely, and irreversibly happy, and this implies infinite Perfection, I mean as much as a finite Nature is capable of, and then God will not only be disabled from adding to his Happiness by new Rewards, but new Laws. *4thly.* The Force of this Instance only extends to determine the Motives, not the Right of Obedience; or, in a word, what will engage us actually to obey, not wherein the Right or Duty of Obedience is fixed; and therefore tho' Rewards and Punishments are the true and proper Motives to secure a rational Obedience, yet the Right of Obedience may rest upon a distinct Foundation. Now I have a President before me, I may at least with leave of this Author suppose something out of the Way as well as he, to prove the truth of the Assertion; suppose a Man created to infinite and irreversible Happiness, though God has no longer a Power of contributing or adding to his Happiness, yet I hope this Author in this Case will not deny God's Right of Sovereignty, and Dominion over him, as his Creature. In one word, I have proved, That the Devils

Devils in Hell are or will be in a State of irreverfible and infinite Mifery, and though for this Reason they can be acted with no Inclinations of Obedience, yet they muft ftill believe, or acknowledge the Sovereignty of their Creator, and tremble.

I prefume I have now in fome Meafure fixed the Foundation of God's Sovereignty and Dominion over us; and tho' I have ufed fome Liberty in rejecting the Opinions of others, yet I hope I may fairly account for it. For the Notions I have contended for, are founded on things, that fall in with the eftablifhed Sentiments of Mankind; fuch as are properly founded in a creative preferving Power, and confequently they muft command a Submiffion, and Obedience upon the cleareft Convictions of Reason; and as long as the Arguments fuggelted are cogent and fatisfactory, it is not Prudence to leave the common Road, and put things of Moment and Importance upon an Ifsue that it may be wants Evidence; or at leaft contradicts fome received Truths or Notions. But now an Enquiry of this Nature has been made, I cannot difmifs the Argument without adoring our Great and Good God, Crea-

tor and Sovereign, *For who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on High, and yet humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and in the Earth, Psalm 113. ver. 5, 6.* Tho' God is invested with such an absolute Sovereignty over the Sons of Men, yet he has graciously condescended to consider their Infirmities, Wants and Necessities. It's already concluded, that the Laws he originally gave to Mankind are adapted to the great Ends and Interests of our Nature; they are not only contrived to preserve its Frame from Violence and Ruin, but to advance and secure that Happiness its capable of receiving: They are contrived not so much to represent the Authority of an absolute Creator, as to establish the Happiness of his Creatures; whatever Right of Dominion God may challenge to impose those Laws he has given us, it's manifest they carry their own Arguments of Obedience along with 'em. He has not bound us with the Cords of Fear, but Love; indeed they have the highest Overtures of Love to recommend 'em; Love not only for the exceeding Recompence of Reward that is annexed to the observance of 'em, but Love that is contained in the very Frame

Frame of 'em, even Love as dear and valuable to us, as the Love of Ourselves, and our own Happiness, since they are the direct and immediate Instruments of Happiness; so that were God destitute of a Right of imposing Laws, or even a Power of contributing further to our Happiness by fresh Rewards, the Nature and Tendency of those Laws he has actually imposed (if not obstructed by very debauched Propensions,) is sufficient to secure an Obedience to him.

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**CHAP.**

## C H A P. IX.

*Of the Certainty of Rewards and Punishments under a State of Nature.*

§. 1. **I**Ndeed I have already touched upon this Argument, in the Disquisition of a Law of Nature; but in order to the establishing a Scheme of Natural Religion, I think myself obliged to enlarge a little further upon it. And first, I shall not Appeal to the Argument of Natural Conscience, warranted by Revelation itself; in as much as it contains an Absolving or Condemning Faculty in it, and consequently must be acted with a Sense of Rewards and Punishments, the immediate Spring or Appendage of such Powers or Faculties. This will be considered on another Subject. To proceed then, It's already concluded, That the Dictates of Natural Reason are true and proper Laws established in a rightful and competent Authority; that is, in one word, they are

are the Commands of a Sovereign Power and Authority over the whole Off-spring of Mankind. And 'tis already concluded, that Rewards and Punishments (I mean such as are lodged in the Hands of the Legislator, not the natural Effects of the Action, arising from the Observation or Violation of the Law) are, at least, the necessary Appendages or Concomitants of a Law. I will not run into the nice and tedious Disputes of the Schools, and examine whether Rewards and Punishments are so much of the Nature or Essence of a Law, that it loses the denomination of a Law without them: This must be allowed by those, that place the Obligation of a Law purely in a Power of Rewarding or Punishing. But this has been disputed already, and therefore I'm inclined to the Negative. But however it cannot be denied, but Rewards are an inseparable Property of a Law, adding Perfection to it, and a Prerogative peculiar to every Legislator. For certainly no one can be a rightful Legislator, without a Right to dispense Rewards and Punishments: They declare and signify a binding Authority, and no one can pass for a rightful Legislator, without a Right to oblige or require Obedience.

dience. Herein a Law distinguishes itself from Counsel or Exhortation. Again, they contribute to the Perfection of a Law, since the Ends and Intentions of it cannot be secured without 'em.

This is absolutely necessary, where the Persons that yield an Obedience, are acted by contrary Dispositions and Propensions; and consequently they may justly be esteemed inseparable Properties of a Law. I will not dispute the Power or Prerogative of Heaven, whether God could not rightfully enjoyn a Law without annexing suitable Rewards and Punishments; but whosoever compares the Laws he has enjoyned with the Propensions of Human Nature, will be apt to impeach his infinite Wisdom for not annexing suitable Rewards as well as Punishments, since without 'em it's morally impossible to enforce the Observance of such Laws. Indeed Rewards and Punishments are so much a Property of a Law, that God thought fit to usher the first positive Law he gave to Mankind into the World, by annexing 'em to it; *In the Day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, Gen. 2. 17. As if he intended to imprint a Sense of Rewards and Punishments in the Original Idea



**Idea of a Law.** In a word, they are so much the Property of a Law, that wherever there is the Face of Government, and Laws enacted, Rewards and Punishments are esteemed the unquestionable Prerogatives of the legislative Power. The whole Off-spring of Mankind that were ever under the Conduct of a Law, are acted with such a deep Sense of 'em, that a Right of Punishment is never disputed, tho' the Penalty is not expressly annexed. ~ Thus far then at least we are advanced; unless we can deny a Sovereign Creator a Right of exercising a legislative Power, we must allow him a Right of executing Punishments upon the Violation of his Laws, as well as a Power of rewarding the Observance of them.

§. 2. But now the Certainty of Divine Punishments, as well as Rewards, pursuing all his Laws, even Laws of Nature, is evinced from indisputable Authorities. Few will be forward to dispute the Certainty of Rewards, and therefore I shall consider it purely with respect to Punishments: And 1<sup>st</sup>, That God will dispence certain Punishments

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upon the Violation of any Law of Nature, follows from the general Ends and Intentions of all Law-givers; especially the Supreme Divine Law-giver, that gave Being to every Soul, that is capable of receiving a Law, as well as Laws to govern them by. Now no Law-giver can ever give Laws to others, without designing, for some special Ends and Purposes, to have them executed, and observed: Without this it's absurd, for a Law-giver to engage in enacting Laws, or trouble his Subjects with the Burden that arises from the Imposition of them. In a word, it's to act in vain, or to no purpose; an Imputation that cannot without Horror, and Blasphemy be charged upon God, who is always governed by the unchangeable Dictate of infinite Wisdom. Therefore since we must conclude, that the Sovereign Lord of all the World, is acted with the deepest concern to have his Laws executed, since Punishment is the best Expedient to enforce the Execution of 'em, and since Punishment is due upon the Violation of 'em, it must follow that Punishment will attend the Violation of 'em.

bu 8. 13. But 2<sup>dly</sup>, The Certainty of Punishment discovers itself from the Nature of these Laws, with relation to those Beings to whom they are given. Now it's already concluded, That Laws of Nature arise from the established Frame and Condition of our Beings, and Center with the prime Ends and Interests of 'em. The Observance of Laws of Nature bring natural Rewards along with 'em, sufficient to recommend 'em to the Choices of reasoning Beings; and the Violation of 'em implies a Renunciation, not only of the common Rules of Prudence, but Self-preservation, the necessary Instinct of sensitive unthinking Beings. And therefore when Laws of Nature are violated, there seems no Room or Foundation left to excite or work upon infinite Mercy: Indeed, did God act like an *Egyptian* Task-master, and not only require Brick without Straw, but continue the Tail upon the greatest Sweat and Drudgery, merely to exert an absolute Sovereignty and Dominion, he might sometimes be melted into Compassion, when a poor Vassal happens to fall short of the Line of

Duty ; but now the Violation of them, implies the highest Aggravations of Folly, and resolved Iniquity ; and therefore we cannot imagine that any thing can induce an infinitely wise Creator to suspend any Punishments he can justly execute.

§. 4. But 3<sup>dly</sup>, Let us consider the Nature of the Command, with respect to God that gave them. Now certainly, since it is concluded, That Laws of Nature, or Dictates of Nature take their Rise from the Author of Nature, they are not only established according to the original Frame of created Nature ; but according to the infinite Purity and Holiness of God : They are the express Image of his Person, and the Brightness of that infinite Mind, with whom there is no Shadow of Darkness or Impurity. On this Account the Violation of Laws of Nature, is not only an Affront committed against the Majesty and Sovereign Authority of God ; but a gross Aspersions upon his infinite Purity and Holiness ; and consequently it must engage him in the deepest Resentments : So that Punishment is now no more an Act  
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of Sovereignty, but an Act of Justice, to wipe off the Dirt that is by this means cast upon his infinite Purity: If He's of purer Eyes than to behold, much less to cohabit with Iniquity, certainly he must be armed with the highest Resentments, even such as will answer the Character he has given of himself, *for our God is a consuming Fire.* And therefore though his infinite Love and Mercy, might sometimes engage him to remit the Punishment that is due to the Violation of a known Law, yet his infinite Justice will not suffer him, till he has satisfied the Demands of his infinite Purity and Holiness. In one word, whosoever seriously surveys the Actions of the Almighty, will plainly discover how directly all his Laws result from the whole Circle of his Divine Attributes; and therefore it's a senseless Project to set up his Mercy against his Justice, Purity and Goodness, and thereupon promise our selves an Exemption from Punishment: It's evident therefore that Laws of Nature, as well as all other Laws are guarded with Punishments suitable to the Nature of 'em. And if God is not concerned to vindicate his Authority,

he'll certainly be concerned to vindicate his infinite Purity and Goodness, and therefore we may conclude *tho' Hand joyn in Hand, the Disobedient shall not go unpunished.* I will not pretend to fix a Standard of Punishment for Offences committed against Laws of Nature, I mean with respect to the Nature, Degrees or Continuance of them; for *tho'* there are a great many Arguments that might suggest very considerable Discoveries in these matters; yet I think they were in a great measure Secrets lodged in the Hands of God, till he thought fit to reveal himself in Cases of this Nature, this being the proper Business of Revelation: It's sufficient to Believers and Christians, that he has now done it beyond all dispute or cavil. Again, I will not pretend to conclude every particular Soul that acts against Laws of Nature under the Vengeance of Heaven: Punishment no doubt will be proportioned according to the means of Information, and there may be certain Cases in a State of Nature, where invincible Ignorance may be a Plea at the Bar of Justice to particular Persons; but yet the Actions of Men are intricate, and Humane

mane Knowledge shallow, and of a narrow compass; and therefore we must leave these as Secrets to the *Discerner of Spirits*, and that *Candle of the Lord*, I mean every Man's particular Conscience. It's sufficient that the Violations of Laws of Nature antecedent to Revelation, render Mankind obnoxious to Punishments, and that all the Reason in the World instructs us, God will infallibly inflict them. And therefore it's the Concern of Mankind, either to live in the Observance of 'em, or to appear with a more substantial Defence than I can think of, lest they bring themselves into an irreversible State of Condemnation.

## C H A P. X.

*Of the Original of Parental Duty,  
Love, and Affection; and filial  
Reverence, and Duty.*

§. 1. **I**T was not my Design to descend to Particulars, no more than to present the World with an exact List or Catalogue of Laws of Nature. Several Attempts of this kind have been made by eminent and learned Hands, some with great Success, and to all imaginable Satisfaction. It's sufficient if I have in some Measure prepared a Key that will unlock the Cabinet; and so far let us into the Book of Nature, that we may by the Workings of natural Reason discover the great Lines of Laws of Nature, and judge which are to be ranked into the number, and which esteemed positive. But since the whole Hypothesis is advanced without any regard to relative Characters, and consequently the Original and Obligation of relative Duties are not so directly measured



red by it ; I shall take the Liberty of enquiring into those which God in his Providence has made so important in the Affairs of Men, I mean those between Parents and Children. And first of a parental Love and Affection : Indeed this is a Passion so deeply impressed on the Frame of the Soul, that it powerfully discovers itself thro' all the Parts of the Animal World. To love our own Off-spring, seems to be the Effects of a natural Instinct or Propension, that as violently exerts itself, as the Spark that flies upwards. The Moral Vertuoso's of the present Age are here shamefully foiled, in projecting their Scheme : For tho' they may labour to stifle the Evidences of other Laws, that bespeak them to be the pure Workings of Nature ; the Testimony which the sensitive Order of Creatures bears to this of natural Affection, renders their Attempts wholly unsuccessful. It might have been replied, That a parental Affection expressed in the Care of their own Off-spring, is only a fashionable Imployment, set on foot to perpetuate their own Names and Memories ; but when the lower Order of Creatures, that want Faculties to form any  
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such foresighted Projections, discover an equal Share of Concern, Industry and Compassion; they as well as we must conclude that it's the Effect of some peculiar Propensions, wove in with the Frame and Constitution of our Beings. Indeed the Fondness, Vigilance, Labour and Industry, that unthinking Brutes exercise towards their own Off-spring, cannot be resolved into any thing, but a powerful Sympathy and Earning which God hath implanted in them, as they bear their own Image and Representations, or rather as they are the Effects of their own most intimate Powers and Faculties, and carry their own Principles of Life, Blood, and Spirits in 'em; or, in a word, as they imply the most sensible Expansion and Propagation of their own Natures.

And here I cannot well forbear a short Digression. If it be enquired how these inward Motions are excited, I think it may be safely replied, Not by Reason, or a formal Inference; for no Inference can be made even from particular Objects, but by the help of abstract Ideas, or general Notions, or Maxims, and a Power of comparing and distinguishing two

or more things together : Thus, Suppose a Lioness by Reason were to conclude that this, and not another, to wit, a second, third, or fourth Whelp is her own Off-spring ; she must compare the Off-spring in certain Lineaments and Features, or other sensible Qualities, with the Idea she had before conceived ; she must compare this with the Idea she has of those she rejects ; and after a strict Agreement with the former, and a palpable Disagreement with the latter, she cannot come to a rational Assent without some abstracted Ideas of Identity and Diversity, or without the help of two general Maxims, that where the present Object exactly agrees with the Idea before conceived, it is the same, and where the present Object differs from the Idea, which another particular Object yields, it cannot be the same but another. This is the Analysis of the most simple Reasoning, and of a narrower compass too, than some of Mr. *Lock's* Complex Ideas, and therefore I cannot but wonder how he, upon his Definition of Reason, can assign Reason to Brutes, especially when he denies them a Power of abstracting, or compounding, or forming Complex Ideas

deas, and allows them a Power of comparing only in a very inferior Degree. See Essay B. 2. Cap. 11. and B. 4. Cap. 17.

But to return, It's visible these inward Motions of Tenderneſs and Compassion are excited by the Emanation of certain Particles peculiar to the Off-ſpring of each reſpective Kind or Order of Brutes, chiefly affecting the Senſe of Smelling. And hence the ſilly Brute exerciſes the ſame Fondneſs towards her Siſter's Off-ſpring; nay, even towards one of another Order, in caſe the difference in Form, Smell, Shape or Proportion is not too notorious. Hence, we may preſume, the Affection dwindles and wears off, as theſe Particles that accompanied the Off-ſpring from the Womb, decay in Power and Efficacy; and conſequently that by a Law of Providence they retain 'em, till they are capable of providing for their own Subſiſtence. From all this it's indifputably evident, that a parental Affection is implanted in the very Frame and Conſtitution of Unthinking Brutes. And therefore, ſince Providence has inſtituted the ſame Laws and Methods for bringing Man-kind into the World, with thoſe he has  
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assign'd to Brutes, we must conclude that he has created 'em with the same original Propensions; and as he has given 'em nobler Powers and Faculties, as Springs and Movements to every Action, so we must conclude that these Propensions in Men are set on Work after a different manner from those in Brutes. They are not acted by pure Sensations, but by the Powers of Reason added to 'em; for when a Child is represented to the Mind to be the most lively Exertion of our vital Powers and Faculties, *to be Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh*, the first Assent to such an Idea, must actuate these native Propensions into all the Offices of Love, Care and Tenderness. These are but the natural Sallies of that Affection which we were created with towards ourselves; for *no one as yet ever hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it*. So that a parental Affection is so much a Law of Nature, that the first Suggestions of Reason excite to the exercise of it. A single Conclusion commands an Assent to the Duty, and at the same time kindles or actuates the Affections into a Practice suitable to it. Indeed it's a Law that so apparently results from the Frame

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of Humane Nature, that it carries the Appearance of being Innate; and, in one word, for Man to love and cherish his Off-spring, is certainly the Result of an innate Propension; but the exercise of it from the consideration of the close Affinity it bears to his own Flesh and Blood, is a Work of Reason. This seems to be a Law truly written in our Hearts, for if we ever think or reason upon the Subject, Nature will command a practical Assent to it. Indeed Reason does not more carefully dictate the Law than Nature; both within and without conspire to enforce the Practice of it; for if the first Workings of Reason powerfully excite a paternal Affection, I'm sure the primitive Impotence in which Providence has decreed Mankind to be brought forth, loudly instructs us we should exert it in the most affectionate Methods of Preservation.

In a word, A parental Care and Affection is so clearly pointed out as a Duty, even by the Dictates of Natural Reason, that the perpetual Reproaches, which the Care and Conduct of senseless Brutes throw upon the Neglect of it, are (one would think) Punishment or Motive sufficient

sufficient to enforce the Observance of it. And therefore where such natural Bowels of Compassion are wanting, it's an infallible Indication that the Mind is desperately sunk in Barbarity. And now let the Latitudinarian endeavour to overturn this Branch of a Law of Nature, by trumping up some unnatural Cruelties among the *Greeks*, yet I think it rests upon an unshaken Foundation; and therefore before he Rejects it upon such a slender Suggestion, let him consider that there are some few Monsters among Brutes, that instead of Preserving, destroy their own Off-spring. And as there are some among this Order, so God may, *to make known the Power of his Name*, suffer some Monsters among Men, without injuring a Law, that is established with so much Evidence and Solemnity.

§. 2. I proceed in the second place, to consider the Foundation and Original of filial Reverence and Duty.

And first, I think a parental Care and Tenderneſs, in fencing us from Cold and Nakedneſs, and giving us a liberal Education, when, without the ſiſt, we muſt have periſhed in our own Impotence,

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is sufficient, if once applied to the Mind, and attended to, to dictate the highest Tokens of Reverence, if not Duty. A sense of such inestimable Benefits upon the first Convictions of Reason, are sufficient to induce an Obligation to make suitable Returns to 'em, and I think nothing less than that Honour and Reverence that expresses itself in a conscientious Submission to all just and equitable Commands. I mean such as pass for the Consequences of Laws of Nature, or are fairly consistent with 'em. But this seems to carry us no further than the Kindness of a signal Benefactor indispensably obliges us to; whereas a Parent implies something more considerable than the Notion of a Benefactor can suggest, and therefore Reason seems to dictate that God hath raised a more strict and absolute Foundation of Obedience; and certainly the Obedience which is paid towards a Parent, is naturally acted with such a reverential Awe and Deference, as argues a kind of Authority and Dominion, and consequently contains something more in it than a Sense of Benefits. And truly our great Creator hath sufficiently discovered the thing, since he seems



to have raised an Obedience from the same Title, upon which his Right of Obedience is established; a creating as well as preserving Power. For since he has decreed to make Parents the great Instruments of our Production and Existence, as well as Preservation, we must conclude, that he intended to establish an Obedience upon it. It's abundantly concluded, that as God is, by the Powers of Natural Reason, represented to us to be the great Fountain of our Being and Preservation, a Sense of Duty and Obedience, as well as a Right of Obedience, as powerfully results from it, as Light from the Sun.

And since Parents, by a Divine Decree, are honoured with the same Characters in as eminent a manner as is consistent with the Nature of a Creature or Substitute; and are Created with strong and invincible Propensions, as well as Laws and Obligations, to answer the Intentions of them, Reason will oblige us to conclude, that God has thereby induced Obligations of a subordinate Obedience, that is, in all those Cases wherein he has not expressly interposed by a Law of Nature, or Revelation.

lation. Indeed this seems to be an Expedient to establish and confirm that Supreme Right of Obedience which his creative preserving Power challenges over us; and in a word, his appointing our Production in a strict Imitation of his Methods of Creation, is an Argument of his Intentions to establish an unquestionable Right of Dominion in both Cases: Since the same Motives instruct us to acknowledge a supereminent Right of Dominion in our Common Parent, and a subordinate one in our Natural.

§. 3. But further, it's already concluded, That the Offices of Parental Duty are enforced upon the strongest Propensions, as well as Obligations, even an invincible Concern for our own Flesh and Blood; and where the Concern is reciprocal, we cannot imagine but it serves to establish a Right of Duty and Obedience, as well as enforce it. But now as the great Creator of the World thought it necessary to represent and enforce the Duty of Parents by certain indeleble Propensions, so Reason will instruct us, that he has constituted

raised Propensions as powerful in Children, upon which he intended to establish a Sense of Duty, as well as enforce an Obedience. Indeed where the Duties are equally binding, of the same moment and importance, and an equal Intention to maintain and enforce 'em, we cannot imagine but our wise Lawgiver would make the same Provisions to see his Designs and Intentions answered. And truly the Duties of both turn upon the same Foundation, a passionate Affection to our own Flesh and Blood. For the Concern we entertain for it in ourselves, will naturally convey itself to those that are but one remove from us. This is so apparent, that it's justly to be esteemed a main Foundation of the common Bowels of Humanity, and those Social Offices we exercise as Men towards one another.

But to return; It's visible, the Alliance is equal on both hands, and consequently we may justly presume, that the Propensions of Duty and Reverence are as strong on the Child's part, that receives a Being and Subsistence, as the Propensions of Care and Compassion on the Parents that ministers both.

The Maxim holds this way, *no one as yet ever hated his own Flesh.* From all this it's evident, since God has implanted such deep and powerful Propensions, we must conclude, that the bare Proposal of a Parent to the Mind, so as to apprehend the true force and purport of the Term, will naturally command these Propensions into the highest Instances of Duty and Obedience, as well as Awe and Reverence: This is a Duty so legible in the Frame and Constitution of our Beings; that Nature, by the help of a single Conclusion at the same time, dictates and enforces it: And I'm perswaded, were not the Frame of the Soul; in this as well as other Cases, miserably perverted by vitious Habits, or Dispositions, contracted thro' Education, or Example, it's impossible but she must rest under a perpetual Sense and Apprehension of it.

And now let some Men Harangue upon the Act of Generation as liberally and contemptibly as they please, we have all the Reason in the World to believe, that God has made it one Ground of an eternal and indispensable Duty. I'm sure he that subscribes to the

the Truth and Divinity of the Sacred Oracles, must own it as such, since we find it expressly assigned as an Argument of the Duty: *Hearken unto thy Father that begat thee*, Prov. 23. ver. 22. But then when we consider, that we did not only take our Rise from the Loins of a Parent, but drew all our Blessings thro' his Care and Inspection, and that God, by a special Decree, enjoined it upon 'em as an indispensable Duty, it's an evident Confirmation of the fundamental Title, that of Generation, and an unquestionable Argument, that God intended to induce indispensable Obligations of Obedience upon it. And truly he that considers and allows God's Right of Dominion to be founded in his creative preserving Power, must allow a subordinate Right of Dominion in him whom he has made the immediate Instrument and Substitute for displaying the Glory and Wonders of

Thus far, I presume, it's abundantly evident, that the Obligations of Filial Duty and Obedience rest upon an unquestionable Foundation. That which remains, is to consider the Extent of

em; and this will best be performed by applying 'em to the first Parent of Mankind, from whom the Notion will present itself as it lies in its original Model. And certainly we may, in the first place, affirm, That Filial Duty and Obedience doth not barely consist in any external Ceremonies, or Instances, of Respect, nor even those that terminate in Obligations to succour and relieve a Parent under Want or Distress; but it extends to the Regulation of our Lives and Actions by Commands and Laws in all the Parts and Instances of Human Life.

§. 4. From what has already been offered, I think it may, with force of Reason, be affirmed, That the first Parent of Mankind is, by God, invested with a Sovereign Power over his Offspring to prescribe Laws for the Conduct of their Lives and Actions, in all Cases and Emergencies pursuant to the Laws of God — whether natural or revealed, or where God has no way interposed to the contrary. And pursuant to this, it's an uncontroverted Truth, that the Patriarchs rightfully exercised the

the Priestly Function, will God interpo-  
sed by a positive Institution, and consti-  
tuted a standing Order of Men to wait  
on his altar; this is so agreeable to the  
Divine Will, that though private Per-  
sons cannot preside in the public Wor-  
ship of God without an Intrusion of the  
Priestly Office, yet every Parent by Di-  
vine Designation and Appointment is  
still a kind of Priest within the District  
of his own Family: And certainly if a  
Paternal or Patriarchal Power originally  
includes a Priestly Power, I can see no  
Reason to dispute the Authority of a  
Kingly Power. And agreeable to this,  
History assures us, that the Kings of E-  
gypt, as well as other Governments,  
originally exercised a Sacerdotal as well  
as Civil Jurisdiction.

*Invasion*

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But to proceed: The Business, or De-  
sign and Authority of the supreme Pow-  
er, or in a word, of all those delegated  
Powers which God hath or ever will  
establish among Mankind, is to pre-  
scribe Laws for the Regulation of our  
Lives and Actions in all Cases and E-  
mergences. And if Government and  
positive Human Laws—by the Laws  
of Nature and the Frame of our Beings

are absolutely necessary to the Conduct of Mankind in a State of Nature, as well as Grace; we have all the Reason in the World to conclude, that this Power and Authority was originally lodged in the paternal Power of Adam over his own Off-spring. It's certain, the Prerogatives of the Supreme Power, do not extend to the wresting away real Rights and Immunities which the Laws of Nature or Revelation give us; for their original Institution is to advance the Welfare and Happiness of Mankind, by securing and enforcing the observance of them; and therefore since it is indisputably concluded, that an authoritative Power is lodged in the Fatherhood, there is no Obstruction in the Nature of the Thing, but the Paternal Power of Adam might extend to the imposing such Laws as are fitted to answer these Ends and Purposes. Indeed God's making Government necessary, seems to advance his Paternal Power to all the Rights and Prerogatives of it, unless he had established it upon another Foundation by some express Law; for God having created the Off-spring of Adam

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*Adam* with the strongest Propensions of Obedience to him as a Father, God having established an Obedience upon the same Principles upon which he challenges our Obedience, we must conclude, that a Right of Obedience accrues to *Adam* as a Father in all those Cases wherein God has made it necessary for Mankind to be governed by Laws: And since God has made it necessary for the Off-spring of *Adam*, and in them, the Off-spring of Mankind (even by the highest Necessity, that of Nature and Existence) to live by Society, and to be governed by Laws in order to the enforcement of the Laws of God, whether Natural or Revealed, and in them in order to the Security of the Wellfare and Happiness of Mankind, the Paternal Power of *Adam* must originally extend to all the Prerogatives of delegated Power, so that by vertue of his Characters which God brought him into the World under, he's to all Intents and Purposes God's immediate Vice-gerent, unless some positive and express Law had signified the contrary.

In a word, a Necessity arising from the Frame and Order of Nature, is, in

a State of Nature, the proper Evidence for Divine Designation and Appointment, or indeed, for any Law of Nature; and therefore since Civil Government is thus far necessary, Reason will dictate God's Intentions in placing it, that is, according to the Order of Nature, or where he has placed the principal Marks of Authority or Supremacy. Indeed the Notion is founded on Arguments so clear and convincing, that natural Reason dictates an Allegiance, as forcibly from a Paternal Power as that of Compact, tho' there were nothing in the Nature of the former that interferes with the Hypothesis of the latter; for an Allegiance which derives from Compact, must rest upon the Authority of Compact, whereby it becomes indispensably binding to all the Ends and Purposes of Civil Government. And I think natural Reason, upon the received Laws of the Creation, as clearly fixes an Allegiance in the Paternal Power, as a Law of God and Nature, as it pronounces the Maintainance of such Compacts, a Law of God or Nature. But then, if upon Matter of Fact, or the revealed Methods of the Creation, there is any thing

thing repugnant to such a Compact, the Authority of a Paternal Allegiance cannot be rejected. Now we profess and believe, that Adam was the Father of Mankind; for even the Woman of whom the rest of his Progeny was to be Born, by an Omnipotent Power issued forth of him; and since it's concluded, That for this Reason as well as for the Offices of his Paternal Function, a real Superiority as well as a Right of Allegiance is derived to him, we must conclude, that his Off-spring could not challenge a Right of Compact any way derogatory to that Preheminence and Superiority which the Laws of God and Nature had thus placed him in. In a word, it's manifest his Age, his Knowledge and Experience gave him a civil Preheminence over his Off-spring, and if we add this to his Paternal Rights, Reason will force us to acknowledge an Authoritative Superiority. Here is not a bare Priority in Time, or Place, or for Order, or external Ceremony; but a Priority, or rather Superiority in Power and Authority. Now all this loudly exposes the Conceit of an original State of Equality, without which, there can

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be no Colour or Foundation for an original Contract. Indeed this is a Conjecture so vain and groundless, that the Divine Methods in Peopling the World by Descent and not by a Multitude at once, is sufficient to shake the Credit of it. And certainly nothing but the wild Supposition which Mr. *Hobbs* has begged to advance his Hypothesis, is contradicted by Matter of Fact, (I mean a Multitude of Men, by Divine Appointment, sprung up like Mushrooms) or an open Renunciation of the History of the Creation, can assert the Doctrine of a natural Equality. But to consider the Argument of Compact a little further: It's certain, Compact is no further valid, than it is materially, or intrinsically good; and therefore no one can rightfully enter into Compact, to resign up or cancel any Laws of God or Nature, or in a word, any further than it is consistent with the true Ends of Government; and thus far the Necessity of Government (without any Injury to natural Liberty) seems to place its Power and Authority in the Person in whom the very Order of Nature, as well some peculiar Marks of Sovereignty, have apparently fixed it.

## C H A P. XI.

*Reflections on some Passages in  
Mr. Lock's Essay of Human  
Understanding, and a Treatise  
of Government. Part 2.*

§. I. **A**Nd first, Mr. Lock having fixed the Original of what the World generally calls Principles, though never so remote from Reason, in the Power of Education, whereby they are rivetted in the Mind before the Memory begins to keep a Register of their Actions, he observes, Men from hence conclude, *That those Propositions, of whose Knowledge they can find in themselves no Original, were certainly the Impress of God and Nature upon their Minds, and not taught them by any one else.* This he endeavours to illustrate by the Instance of Filial Reverence. *These (says he) they entertain and submit to, as many do to their Parents with Veneration; not be-  
cause*

cause it is *Natural*, nor do Children do it, where they are not so taught, but because having been always so educated, and having no Remembrance of the beginning of this Respect, they think it is *Natural*, Essay B. 1. Cap. 3. §. 23.

I will not peremptorily limit the Words to a Sense which they seem to express. If Mr. Lock, by the Term *Natural*, intends so as Native Inscriptions are, then I can readily grant that a Filial Veneration is not in this Sense *Natural*. But if he affirms that it is not *Natural*, as Laws of Nature are (which he seems to do, when he tells us, that Children would not pay any Veneration, were they not so taught) then he must pardon me if I cannot joyn with him in the Notion; for I hope I have sufficiently proved that Children are naturally endowed with as strong Propensions of Filial Reverence and Respect, as those in Parents of Parental Tenderness and Compassion; and that the bare Perception of the Idea or Term Parent, would naturally Actuate these native Propensions in such a manner, as to command not only Solemn Reverence and Respect, but Filial Obedience, had  
not

not Education or ill Example suggested something to the contrary. Indeed, I'm perswaded, a great deal of Filial Reverence and Duty is worn off by those Devolutions, which the Reasons and Necessities of civil Government have made in the chiefest Branches of Parental Power; otherwise I question not but a Sense of the highest Veneration and Duty, I would constantly possess the Minds of Men, as no doubt it did under the first Government, where the Supreme Power was both Parent and Sovereign.

§. 2. But to consider the Positions of another Treatise, I presume, well known to Mr. *Lock*.

And first in order to overturn the Parental Power, as it extends to Government. This Gentleman, as well as Mr. *Hobbs* (tho' both in a different Way) thinks he has gain'd the Field, by proving, that the Mother is an equal Sharer in that Power which accrews to a Father as a Parent: He proves it from both Testaments, particularly *Exod. 20. 12.* and *Eph. 6. 1.* and the Remark is, *Had but this one thing*

thing been well considered, without looking any deeper into the Matter, it might perhaps have kept Men from running in to those gross Mistakes, they have made about Parents. Two Treatises of Government, Part 2. Cap. 6. §. 52, 53. Now in Answer to this, I will not deny but the Word of God enjoyns Duty and Obedience to both Parents; but he cannot be ignorant but it must be assigned to the Mother, only in a Subordinate manner; for else I would fain know how with any colour of Truth or Reason he expounds these Passages. *Thy Desire shall be to thine Husband, and he shall rule over thee, Gen. 3. 16. Wives submit yourselves unto your own Husbands, as unto the Lord; for the Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the Wives be unto their own Husbands in every thing, Eph. 5. 22. &c. St. Peter is as large on the same Argument, to whom I shall refer him, Eph. 1. 3. So that it's evident the revealed Law gives a supereminent Power to the Father, even as a Father, as well as a Husband; since the Wife is to obey in all things,*  
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and consequently to give place to his Authority, in laying his just Command upon his Children.

But further, the natural Frame of Man, not only in respect of Strength and Vigour of Body, but Courage and Resolution of Mind, seems to give him so much Superiority and Preheminence, as by the Dictates of Natural Reason is sufficient to establish a supereminent Power and Authority to that of the Woman: I'm sure the holy Spirit draws the Character not unlike this, when the Woman is stil'd *The weaker Vessel*. But now, in the present Argument, we are to have recourse to Matter of Fact, by considering the Method God took in the Production of the Woman; for the Dispute being whether *de facto*, the Paternal Power of Adam was Supereminent to that of the Woman; It's abundantly concluded if it be made appear from the established Methods of the Creation; and the Argument is the same in the Original of Government; for this is to be taken from Mat-

ter of Fact, especially as long as 'tis recorded and transmitted upon unquestionable Authority; and when once the Original of Government is fixed, the Succession of Governments will easily be accounted for, without Projecting an imaginary State of Nature and Equality, and original Compact upon it. It is not my Business now to draw the Scheme, but if this Author will not be content without it, he shall have it upon Demand; and therefore it's unpardonable Arrogance in those that receive the Story of the Creation, to erect a Scheme without any regard to it, or rather such a highly inconsistent with the plain Doctrines of it.

But to return, the Records of the Creation assure us, That the Woman, or Mother of Mankind, took her Being from the Man; God did not think fit to give her an Original Independent of the Man, by an immediate Creation from common Matter, but made her a Debtor to the Man, by forming her of his Flesh and Blood; and therefore if this is

allowed, natural Reason will pronounce it a Mark of natural Subjection, and consequently assign her no more than a subordinate Authority. I'm sure the holy Spirit remarks as much, where we are expressly told, *The Head of the Woman is the Man, and that He is the Image and Glory of God; but the Woman is the Glory of the Man, for the Man is not made of the Woman, but the Woman of the Man; neither is the Man created for the Woman, but the Woman for the Man,* 1 Cor. II. 3, 7, 8, 9.

But further, If a natural Subjection does not Result from the Laws of Creation, we may find it establish'd by a Positive Law: *For thy Desire shall be to thy Husband, and he shall Rule over thee,* Gen. 3. 16. Indeed it deserves our Notice to observe how this Author labours to droll away the Import of the Text, by exposing Adam's Monarchy, being in the next Verse, in his own Language, *Condemned to be a Day-labourer for Life,* Pa. 1. Cap. 3d p. 44, 45. But who sees not thro' the Weakness of the Harangue, for

after all his Tricks and Insinuations he's not able to prove that God has not placed the Woman in a State of Subjection, tho' it be interpreted as part of her Punishment, and consequently established a supereminent Power and Authority in *Adam*, tho' he wanted not his Punishment in being condemned to reap the Blessings of this Life, even of Government itself, in continual Sweat and Labour. Here is not a supereminent Power established in Compact, but conferred by God himself. Indeed it's indisputably evident, all those Rights of Dominion that were invested in *Adam*, even that which results from his Conjugal Estate, was conferred by God; for tho' God was pleased to leave the Conjugal Estate of his Descendents, to be established upon voluntary Contracts, he thought fit to make his an immediate Grant as well as the Authority of it. But then, tho' the entering into a State of Matrimony now is a pure Compact, yet the Authority that derives upon the Husband from it, is by no means a piece of Compact; this is  
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established by God alone in the first Institution of Matrimony, and enforced by After-laws.

The Sum of all is this, The Rights of Parental Jurisdiction considered in the Nature of the Thing itself, had been in common to our first Parents, had not God signified the contrary, by giving the *Woman* a Being from the *Man*, and assigning him a supereminent Power by an express Law; and since this is abundantly evinced, I hope an imaginary State of Equality or Freedom shall not hinder God from limiting his own Ordinances at Pleasure; and consequently the Rights of the Paternal Power are indisputably invested in the Fatherhood. Here is the main Effort of our Adversaries; for the only Artifice to strip the Fatherhood of all civil Jurisdiction, was to clog the Notion with Absurdities, by contending for a joynt Jurisdiction in the Mother, upon the Foundations of the Parental Power; and therefore this being set aside, there is nothing left that is of force to Discard any of those Prerogatives that have hitherto been assigned,

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But to proceed, He tells us that the Parental and Political Power are so perfectly Distinct and Separate, and Built upon so different Foundations, and given to so different Ends, that every Subject that is a Father, has as much a Paternal Power over his Children as the Prince has over his, Ib. . . 7. But it's manifest the Argument is, concerning Paternal and Political Power, as it was in the original Institution of 'em. And it's already granted, that Paternal and Political Power, as exercised in the present Governments of the World, are visibly distinguished; but it cannot be an Argument they were so in their Original. The present Governments of the World rest upon different Foundations from what Government did in its Original, and yet it does not follow that their Foundation was an original Compact from a perfect State of Nature or Equality, for I desire this Author to prove that there was ever any Body of Men regularly and *de jure* in such a State, since the Creation, unless Manumitted by the Civil Power.

Again,

Again, the Exercise of the Paternal Power in private Families, that are the Descendants of Adam, is vastly different from what it was in the Original; for God having made Government necessary to the Support of Mankind, it was absolutely necessary that that part of the Paternal Power, which consists in Governing by Laws, should devolve from Under-families upon Adam, and consequently in After-governments it must still remain in the Father of each respective Government, or in other Terms in the Governing Power. But notwithstanding all this, the commanding Power and Authority, which has been abundantly asserted to be in the original Rights of the Paternal Power, by the Laws of God, and the Reasons of the thing, still remains in private Parents or Fathers, where the Civil Power has not expressly interposed, or where it is necessary it should exert itself in the Conduct of Humane Life. But to demonstrate from eternal Distinction of Paternal from Political Government, he, in another place, presents us with

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an Instance of a Stranger's coming into a Family, who should Kill one of the Patriarch's Children; upon which he allows the Patriarch a Power to put him to Death, and yet he says it's impossible he should do it *by Virtue of any Paternal Authority*, Ib. p. 74. Now, for my part, I'm so far from discerning any Impossibility, that I cannot fathom the Consequence of the Argument. For certainly unless he would beg the Question, or pronounce it Impossible, that a Paternal Power should employ a Coercive Power in it, within the Districts of its Government, over all those that disturb the Peace of it; why may not the Power of Capital Punishments be attributed to a Paternal Power, without a Consent or Deputation from those Children that are the principal Members of it? Though he cannot punish the Stranger as his own Offspring, yet if a Political Power branches itself from a Paternal Power (as has been sufficiently proved) I hope no one can deny but there is such Powers lodged in it as are sufficient to secure the Ends of Government; and consequently



quently a Coercive Power to Punish any from within or without, that invade the Peace of it.

But 3dly, To support his own Hypothesis, and avoid the Political Authority of the Paternal Power, he affirms, That tho' the Duties of Honour and Respect are Eternal, yet the commanding Power is Temporary, and ceases with Nonage or Minority. See § 64, 67, 69, &c. That when this Power expires, Children are in as absolute a State of Freedom as the Father, and that too, not only in respect to the Father's Authority, but of the Civil Government. This is the Substance of several Sections, and it's very visible, that his chiefest Arguments are raised upon Paternal Power, as 'tis exercis'd under the established Governments of the World, which is a Fallacy already detected. But to make some Returns according to Method and Order. The Duty of Children I'm persuaded, in the full Extent of it, is of eternal Obligation, where 'tis not superseeded by a higher Law, that of Society, upon which account alone (as is already observed)

ved) part of it by the Reason and Necessity of Things devolves upon the Supreme Power. Indeed, if what has been asserted carries Evidence and Truth in it, the Duty of Children must be Eternal. It has been abundantly proved, That the Ground or Foundation of Filial Duty and Obedience is Eternal, viz. That of Generation, and an unchangeable Affection resulting from it: And if the Ground of Obligation is eternal, the Duty must be so too.

But to proceed, the Word of God seems express in this Matter; for we are not only enjoined to Honour, but Obey our Parents. Now it's well known, Obedience supposes a decretory Power, or commanding Authority; and the Precept not being given under any Limitations that make it Temporary, I cannot discern by what Authority this Gentleman pronounces it Temporary. Indeed I cannot imagine how any one that receives the Holy Scriptures for the Word of God, can safely pronounce the Duty of Filial Obedience Temporary; for we there find it establish-  
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ed and enforced upon such ample Provisions, that we must believe God designed to perpetuate the Obligations of it. The time would fail me to collect all the Passages that manifestly favour this Notion; I shall therefore touch on a few that are very remarkable.

And first, the Power of Blessing and Cursing exercised by the Patriarchs, is a considerable Evidence of the Perpetuity of the Duty: It's well known the Patriarchs constantly exercised this Power, and their Descendants as conscientiously acknowledged it.

It was a Sense of this Power, that made Jacob Expostulate before he embraced his Mother's Expedient: *My Father peradventure will feel me, and I shall be to him as a Deceiver; and I shall bring a Curse upon me, and not a Blessing,* Gen. 27. v. 12. It's therein the Patriarchs challenged an indisputable Right to exercise this Power; for tho' Jacob had obtained the Blessing by an ungenerous Artifice, or Stratagem, yet Isaac thought himself obliged to confirm it; *I have*  
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*blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed,*  
v. 33. A most convincing Argument  
truly, that this Right of Blessing and  
Cursing was founded in a Divine Ori-  
ginal; and certainly there needs no-  
thing more to demonstrate the Divine  
Will and Pleasure than the insepara-  
ble Effects and Consequences of his  
Power, since we find that the Bles-  
sings or Curses of Parents as infallibly  
pursued their Children as they were  
dispensed. Thus the Blessing of *Isaac*  
attended *Jacob*, and the Curses of *No-  
ah* pursued his Son *Canaan*: *Cursed be  
Canaan; a Servant of Servants shall  
he be unto his Brethren,* Gen. 9. v. 25.  
Now certainly a Provision of such  
special Powers can carry no less a De-  
sign in it than the perpetuating of a  
filial Reverence and Duty: If God  
had not design'd to establish an Im-  
mortal Power and Authority in the  
Parent, why should he confer such di-  
stinguishing Marks of Sovereignty  
and Dominion? Can we imagin,  
that such a tremendous Power was  
exerted purely to secure an Obedience  
during Minority, and a ceremonious  
Reverence afterwards exclusive of a  
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commanding Authority? No certainly, this is a Conjecture, that runs counter to all the Accounts of Time; for the Obedience of Children in the first Ages of the World was as remarkable as the Parents Commands after a State of Maturity; and indeed it could proceed from nothing less than a just Sense of an indeleble Character and Authority, as well as Power to enforce it.

But further, the Duty and Obedience of Children is so far from being any wise Temporary, that God has given his own express Promises to perpetuate the Obligation. St. Paul has long since observ'd, that, *Children obey your Parents, is the first Commandment with Promise*, Ephes. 6. 1, 2. And certainly where the Sanction is peculiar or extraordinary, the Obligation of the Command must bear a proportion to it; and where God has discover'd himself so eminently solicitous to enforce the Duty by special Rewards as well as Punishments, we may conclude he intended to perpetuate it. Thus far the Suffrage of Scripture seems clear and indisputable:

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But if all this will not convince, I shall refer this Author to the Story of *Jonadab*, the Son of *Rechab*, out of the very Mouth of the Prophet: The Command or Prohibition was against drinking of Wine as well as building of Houses, which seems to be an Abridgment of the Natural Liberties of Mankind, and consequently if the Commanding Power of Parents ceases with Nonage, it may very well do so in Cases of this Nature. But instead of this, we find the Obligation asserted by a Complication of Arguments; *Jonadab* advances the Command by virtue of a Parental Power and Authority: *To shall drink no Wine, neither ye nor your Sons for ever, that ye may live many Days where ye be Strangers*, Jer. 35. v. 6, 7. The very Commandment with Promise. And the *Rechabites* were possessed with as deep a Sense of its Obligation; for when the Prophet, by the Command of God, tryed their Fidelity, the only Argument of their Non-compliance, was the Command of their Father *Jonadab*, and the Prospect of Inheriting the Blessing annexed to the

the Command, *Thus have we obeyed the Voice of Jonadab our Father, and done all that Jonadab our Father commanded us, v. 8, 9.* But this is not all; for the Obligation of the Command is not only recognised by Men, even those that were immediately concerned in it, but by God himself; for he does not only annex the Promise of the Command, to the Observance of it: *Because ye have obeyed the Commandments of Jonadab your Father, and kept all his Precepts—*

*Therefore Jonadab, the Son of Rechab, shall not want a Man to stand before me for ever, v. 18, 19.* But expressly represents that eternal Obedience that is due to his Commands by it; for this was God's Design in obliging the Prophet to try the Rechabites Constancy and Perseverance, by setting Cups and Pots full of Wine before them, and commanding them to Drink; and therefore the Inference is Recorded: *Go and tell the Men of Judah, and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive Instruction to hearken to my Words? The Words of Jonadab, the Son*

Son of Reehab, that he commanded his Sons are performed: for unto this Day they drink no Wine, but obey their Father's Commandment. Notwithstanding I have spoken unto you rising up early, and speaking, but ye hearkned not unto me, v. 12, 14. And now how can any Man dispute the Perpetuity of a Commanding Paternal Power. Has not God himself drawn the Parallel? If his Commanding Power is not Temporary, neither is that of the Parent. The Nature of the Command might have engaged a powerful Advocate against it, the Freedoms and Immunities of a reasonable Being, but yet the Conscience of so just a Superior, bearing so awful a Character as that of a Father, commands an immediate Submission. Indeed this single Instance represents it as a Doctrine universally received, and in those Ages undisputed; and therefore I presume it will be a Task of some difficulty for this Author to produce a Dispensation, much more a Repeal under the Gospel OEconomy.

But



But I proceed to consider the Arguments already advanced to support the Notion, and I find the main and principal Argument is formed from the Nature, and Reason of Paternal Authority; for the Author, expressly resolves the commanding Power into a help to the weakness, and imperfections of their Nurture, a Discipline necessary to their Education, but when they are once arrived to the Enfranchisement of the Years of Discretion, the Father's Empire then ceases. *Sol. 63.* But let us consider this in the Instance already given, that of our first Parent. I would demand of this Gentleman, whether after Years of Discretion, a Discipline of Civil Commands, and Laws, were not absolutely necessary for the Conduct of our Lives and Actions; yes as necessary as a commanding Discipline to a Child's Education. If therefore Civil Government from the beginning was necessary, even for Adult Persons, this Discipline must be so too; and then let Reason determine whether this commanding Authoritative Power, or this Discipline of giving Laws, and Commands was not Appropriate to *Adam*, in whom God had invested all delegated Power and Authority; and that too

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under the highest marks of Sovereignty and Dominion. I'm periwaded, an unbiased Person would pronounce such a Title unquestionable, when there is no express Law that declares the contrary. Again he tells us, *The Power which Parents have over their Children, arises from that Duty which is incumbent on them, to take care of their Off-spring, during the imperfect State of Childhood.* See Sect. 48. But I am periwaded, I have with good Evidence fixed it on a distinct Foundation. Parental Duty, indeed, is a substantial Reason, that God should Establish a Right of Dominion, but it is no Argument, that he has Established it on this Foundation: no, I have proved the contrary. But admit we, that a Parental Right of Dominion was founded in the Duties of a Parent, yet if Parental Duty be perpetual, a Parental Right of Dominion must be so too. Indeed, to give colour to this uncouth Notion, he suggests, that that part of Parental Duty which consists in Education, ceases when the business of Education is over, he means when Nonage ceases. Sect. 69. But certainly, if Instruction, or Commands are at any time necessary, and not superseded by a higher

higher Power, it's the Indispensible Duty of the Father to enjoy them, and the Duty of Children to embrace them. I presume Christianity will instruct every believing Father, that a Child's Age, or Abilities can never exempt him from giving such Counsels, and Precepts (if he stands in need of them) as may induce him to live in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. Upon the whole then the Commands of private Parents after Nonage are for the most part superseded, by the ample provisions of the Civil Power in all Regular Governments: and in like manner the power of Punishments is justly taken away upon that Interest, or Property, which the Government challenges in all its Members: but yet if any thing is omitted in the Civil Power necessary to the Conduct of the Child's Life, I am perswaded the Parent is not only to administer Counsel, but lay his Commands, and the Child is indispensibly obliged to yield a Conscientious Obedience, upon a just Deference to the Parents's Character, and Authority. This is to obey, *as unto God and Christ, and not unto Men.* This Author freely confesses, that the Duty of Piety expressed not only in Acts of

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Reverence, and Respect, but in Supporting, and defending the Persons of our Parents, is perpetual; and I am persuaded there can be no Just Reason assigned, why a Reverential Obedience to just and reasonable Commands is not perpetual too; it is indeed replied, that the former Results from the Laws of Gratitude, founded in Benefit, so inexpressible, that the one can never be Cancelled, nor the other Compensated; but I hope, it is proved they are founded in something besides, that serves to perpetuate an Obligation; and since a commanding Power has the same Authority and Foundation, I cannot conceive why an Obedience to the Commands of Parents should not be perpetual, where God seems to have made such Commands necessary to the Conduct of Humane Life. Thus far here's no Foundation given for the Suggestion this Author has made in extending the Gospel Precept to a commanding Power, as if by virtue of it a Parent should pretend to treat an Adult Son still as a Boy. *Sect. 68.* For the necessity of such commands is superceded by the circumstances of Age, and Personal Abilities; and tho it is reasonable to  
conclude

conclude, that a Commanding Power remains, yet it ought at all times to be exercised according to the necessity, and reason of things: In a word, the principal Duties of Parents, and Children appear from the nature of the things to be in their Original Institution perpetual, and therefore before this Author had pronounced them Temporary, he should have considered, whether it was not to make the Commandments of God of none effect, to support his vain, and groundless Traditions, such as a State of Freedom, Equality, and original Contract.

S. 4. To consider the State of Freedom, which is affirmed to be as absolute as that of the Father. The only Reason and Argument assigned for this Freedom, is in his own Language this, *The Freedom then of Man, and liberty of Acting according to his own Will, is grounded on his having Reason, which is able to instruct him in that Law he is to govern himself by, and make him know how far he is left to the freedom of his own Will.* Sect.

63. Now I am content to put the Notion on this issue, with a small matter added to it. If Man at a certain period

is endued with a sufficiency of Reason to instruct him in that Law he is to govern himself by, and make him know how far he is left to the Freedom of his own Will, and had Ingenuity, and Integrity enough to prosecute it, then I will grant that he may challenge a Freedom, or Liberty of acting according to his own Will without being accountable to any one, till his own voluntary Compact had made him so : But then such a sufficiency as this, must supersede the necessity of all Civil Government, or positive Laws ; Certainly then if Man after the utmost pretences to Reason, has not a sufficiency of Reason at all times to instruct himself in the Line of Duty, no more than Integrity to adjudge his own Actions conformable to the Line of Duty; we may with very good Reason conclude, that Maturity of Reason does not cancel the Bonds of Filial Obedience, or (to have respect to the instance before us,) admit the Children of *Adam* to an equal State of Liberty with himself, that is, in his own Language, *To challenge an Executive Power in the Exercise of Laws of Nature as much as their Father, as well as Prescribe to their own Will, and regulate their*

their Actions, These are positions that can no way be reconciled with the necessity of civil Government under the most improv'd State of Reason, and that Dominion which by the Laws of the Creation, God had invested him with; for God having made Government necessary for the Support of Grown Men, and actually Invested Adam with a Right of Dominion; Reason must determine without the breach of Humane Freedom, that the Dominion of Adam, was Originally designed to extend as far as was necessary to the Regulation, and Conduct of Humane Actions, as well by Laws, as Counsel. Indeed, the original Mistake is lodged in the Notion of Civil Government compared with Humane Freedom; as if Humane Freedom, or Natural Liberty, were, in the very Notion of it, inconsistent with Government, or as if it were a Breach of Natural Liberty to be placed under the Conduct of that without which, Man with all his Reason cannot Subsist, much less be Happy. Now it is visible, tho' Government implies a Power of imposing, and enforcing Laws, yet the Original Design of it was the Happiness of Mankind in the Regulation of their Lives and Actions,

according to the Laws of God, whether Natural, or Revealed. It is true, the Institution of such a Power may imply an absolute Trust, and whether this Trust is forfeited, and accountable, when the Original Ends of Government are Violated, is another Question. But it is Indisputable these are the only true ends of Government. And I think, no one can affirm, that the direct Methods to Happiness are Breaches of Humane Freedom, yea rather, they are the only Expedients to preserve it, and therefore I can see no Rights in the Exercise of Humane Reason, or Freedom founded on it, to Exempt the Children of *Adam* from that Civil Jurisdiction that Results from his Paternal Power. And now I presume there is enough offered to Reject the pretence of an unlimited Freedom, I have enlarged more plentifully upon it, because it is the Foundation of that State of Equality, upon which Compact is made the first Principle of Civil Government; for this reason I shall offer a few Arguments more, to represent the Absurdity of it.

S. 5. And first, if Children coming to the exercise of Reason are not only  
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discharged from their Paternal Allegiance, but acquire a State of Freedom equal to their Father, as this Position directs, Sect. 66. Then the Children of Adam, had an unquestionable Right to erect a Government over his Head, or at least upon Non-compliance to Exclude him from the Benefits of it; and in a word, to drive him forth from his own Territories; since Civil Governments always challenge a Power to Banish those that refuse to pay Allegiance to them. That the Children, and Descendants of Adam could act thus, is evident; for as they were in a State of Freedom, and Equality, they could enter into a Compact at Pleasure, and consequently Establish a Government upon a Majority against their Fathers. It's highly Probable, the Children of our First Parent were acted by so deep a sense of Duty, as would prevent them from the Executing their pretended Privilege; but I am persuaded, were a Set of Men under the Influence of this Author's Principles, placed in a State of Nature under their Natural Father, the Resentments which the Discipline of their Education might give them, would easily engage them to bandy together at such a rate,

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as to Erect a Government upon his Head; and if they did not call the Old Gentleman to an account for *Mis-Administration*, yet upon Non-compliance, they might think themselves obliged to withdraw those small remains of Respect, which this Gentleman has assigned him. However it is manifest, this Position will Vindicate the Lawfulness of the Project, and therefore it can be no Crime to apply it to the Father of Mankind, and his immediate Descendants. But now, what can be more Unnatural than this is? Can Man pretend the least Reverence, or Respect upon such a Horrid Treason as this? Men may Harangue on the Formalities of Respect as long as they please, but certainly it is some Pretensions to Authority that can preserve a Filial Reverence that is truly valuable, that is, such a Reverence as expresses it self in a chearful Obedience to all just, and reasonable Commands.

S. 6, But to draw towards a Conclusion, this Notion of Freedom carries another Absurdity in it as Injurious to the Civil Power, as it is to the Patriarchal, for in order to assert the Notion  
this

this Author is forced to Discard the Notion of Natural Allegiance, and place every one in a State of Liberty upon their arrival at Years of Discretion, till they shall Recognize the Governing Power by an express, or tacit Consent. An express Consent he fixes in Promises, or Oaths of Allegiance, and a tacit Consent in the Possession or Enjoyment of any part of the Dominions of any Government, Chap. 8. Sect. 119. Part. 2. And further adds, that a Tacit Consent only produces a Temporal Allegiance, *So that in case he quits his Possession by Donation, Sale, or otherwise, he is at Liberty to go, and Incorporate himself in any other Common-Wealth, or agree with others to begin a new one in Vacuis locis in any part of the World they can find Free, or Unpossessed. Sect. 121.* Now certainly these are Positions that cannot well be consistent with the safety of any Government; for it is manifest, they give a Latitude for Rebellion, as well as Disertion. For *first*, The Descendants of the Liege Subjects of any Government do not yield a Tacit Consent even after they arrive at Years of Discretion, by Living, and Subsisting upon the Blessings of it, unless they possess, or enjoy

enjoy some parts of its Dominions: so that not only the Adult Children that Live under their Parents without a Settlement, but even the Poor, or Labouring part of a Nation, or even all that are not the true Proprietors of Estates, still remain in a State of Nature, unless the Government has actually required an Oath of Fidelity. If this be true, as the case now stands in the *English* Government, where Oaths of Allegiance are only required but upon Special Occasions, and where pursuant to our Law, in some cases; he has fixed the term of Nonage at *Twenty One*, he must necessarily bring a Majority of *Effedrive Men* within a State of Nature; and therefore tho upon his Principles a Right doth not accrue to the Possessions of an Established Government, yet in case an Established Government does not think fit to treat them as Men in a State of Nature, or happens to exercise the least shadow of Rigour, or Severity upon them, they are according to rule (his own I mean) the proper Executioners of Laws of Nature, and consequently, they have Right of War, not only against their Common, but Natural Parents. And truly, I do not see but a

Project

Project of this nature might prove extremely successful, for pursuant to this Learned Hypothesis, a Body of Rich Male-Contents that have not entered into an express Allegiance, have power to sell their real Possessions, and when this is done, they are to all intents, and purposes in a State of Nature, and consequently are prepared upon the first Alarm to become Generals to worthy Mobile, and invade their Neighbours Possessions with Thousands, and ten Thousands. Oh! Blessed Politicks, to be the spawn of One that is called into the Counsels of a Government, *Eats its Bread*, and enjoys places of *Trust* as well as *Profit*. I am certain, I have represented the Motion with all imaginable fairness, and tho the Absurdities that are lodged in it may pass for a sufficient Confutation, yet I shall offer something further upon it.

And first, it is on all Hands agreed, that Persons, as well as Things, may become a Property, and Property in the Judgement of the Learned, establisheth a Right of Dominion; Consent at least renders Persons, or free Agents, as much a Property as necessary Agents. Now the dispute is, whether free Agents may  
not

not become a Property, any other way than by Consent. It's observable, the resolves the Foundation of Property, in to Labour, so that whatever is the effect of Labour and Industry, or has Labour mixed with it, becomes a Property, See Chap. 5. Sect. 22, 45. II. Part. Now it's manifest, not only the Education, and Subsistence of Miners, but of thousands of Persons that have not expressly Subscribed to any Government, is carried on by the Labour, Care, and Conduct of the Government, as well as that of their natural Parents; and therefore Reason does not suggest any thing to me, why they are not from their very Infancy to be esteemed a Property of the Government, and consequently a kind of Allegiance, as it were grows up with them to the Government, as well as to their Natural Parents. It's true, it is a Property highly distinct from that in Brutes, for the one seems to be absolute, whereas the other must be limited, that is, to Rational Ends, and Purposes. In this Sense, a free Agent may be a Property of the Supreme Power, as well as that of Terra Firma in another. But now, since the Civil Power challengeth a Property, it cannot be otherwise.

wise than by virtue of the Character it self. I mean that of a Governing Power, and consequently the Property that accrues from it, must Establish a Right of Obedience pursuant to it. In a word, the Governing Power challenges a Right of Labour and Assistance, in order to maintain the Strength, and Grandeur of the Community, and consequently, the Supreme Power must be invested with Authority to impose Laws for the regulation, and exacting of this Labour, and Industry. This is a truth so unquestionable, that all Established Governments constantly challenge such Services as every Home-born Subject is capable of yielding, and exercise Jurisdiction over them with as full Power, as if they had actually Subscribed to its Authority. This they esteem an undoubted Prerogative, notwithstanding any Pretences to a State of Freedom after Nonage. From all this it appears, how unjust this Author's Position is in Authorizing all those that have not entered into an express Allegiance to desert a Government at pleasure; for if the Laws and Measures of Property advanced by this Author, give the Supreme Power a Right of Dominion over every Home-born Subject,

Subject, antecedent to all Subscriptions, as I think has been abundantly evinced, the Subject cannot rightfully withdraw himself from his Native Country without Special License from the Government. I know this is a Question controverted by *Grotius*, *Pufendorf*, and others, and they generally agree, that they cannot rightfully withdraw *Greggim*, because it must destroy the Foundations of Government; but *Pufendorf* argues well, that if one particular Person has a right to withdraw, a Second and Third must have so too, and consequently a multitude, or Body of Men, either jointly or separately. But however, it is universally allowed, that Governments may prescribe Laws in this Affair; and certainly, if a Government can without the express consent of these pretended Free-Born Persons rightfully bind them by Laws, I think the Government has a Right of Allegiance Antecedent to Law; for no Government can pretend a Power of binding by Law, especially, contrary to a Fundamental, Natural Right, where an Antecedent Right of Dominion is wanting, without Compact, or Consent. This is current Doctrine, at least with our  
Author,



Author, the Man for *Original contract*:  
 In a word, the Sum of what has been  
 hitherto offered by the Learned, is ta-  
 ken from the practices of particular Go-  
 vernments, rather than from the Nature  
 or Reason of the thing. Indeed it can-  
 not be denied, but that particular Per-  
 sons have withdrawn from their Native  
 Country, but it is to be interpreted by  
 Permission, or Connivance, not by a  
 Right of Natural Freedom, for there  
 can no just Reason be assigned, why Per-  
 sons as well as Things, may not become  
 a property of the Government, or why a  
 Property is not acquired in both, pur-  
 suant to their proper Ends and Uses, by  
 the same Laws and Measures; so that  
 the Labour and Conduct of the Govern-  
 ment in preserving, and supporting our  
 Persons, may render us a Property of  
 it to all the true ends and purposes of  
 Government, in a rational way, or man-  
 ner, as much as the Occupation or quiet  
 Enjoyment, of any tract of Land render  
 it a branch of its Dominions. Thus  
 far I question not but the Government  
 has a Right, or Property, in the La-  
 bour and Service of every adult Native,  
 as truly as in the product of the Ground,  
 or the Riches and Treasures of a Coun-  
 try,

try, and therefore it's absurd to imagine that any one can rightfully withdraw his Person, much less his Effects, or Treasure, and commit himself and them to another Government, whether new or old. As for this Author, he's so highly sensible how much the number of Subjects contributes to the Trade, Riches, Strength and Glory of a Nation; that were the question formally put and argued in the Council of Trade, and his Preferments, as well as Judgment, engaged upon it, I'm perswaded he would think himself obliged to declare against his former Sentiments. In one Word, it's evident these are positions, that (without a Law that enjoyns an Universal explicit Allegiance) must render every Government highly precarious; for if a single Person can challenge a Right of withdrawing, then may a Second and a Third, and so on to a Body, or Multitude, and by this Means a Nation may not only be dispeopled at pleasure, and consequently drained of her Riches and Treasure, but her own natural Subjects may become her most formidable Enemies.

And now having offered what is sufficient to expose the concept of natural  
Free-

Freedom, I think I have abundantly evinced what was before asserted, That there cannot be a Body of Men, regularly and *de jure* in such a State of Nature, as this Author has projected. For tho' we should allow the first Government to be formed upon compact from a State of Nature, yet if Subjects are naturally a property of a Government, it's impossible there should be a Body of Men, in a perfect State of Nature, without a total dissolution of particular Governments; for as for the Independant State of Supreme Powers, produced as an Instance by this Author, he knows very well it proves nothing to his design, or purpose, that is a body of Men in a State of nature, from which a Government is formed upon the Force and Authority of a joint compact. 2dly, This Notion of a State of Freedom being so clearly confuted by that property, which every Government challenges in all the Subjects of it, as well as every Father in their Children; I think it adds to the strength of former Arguments in asserting the Civil Prerogatives of the Paternal Power; as it lay in the original. For Adam being not only the Great Parent of Mankind, but the sole proprietary of

his Off-Springs, without any Collateral, much less Superior Power to default from any of his Prerogatives; if Government by the Laws of Providence was truly serviceable, or rather necessary, the very Station, as well as Character he bare, is sufficient to give him a right of Dominion and Sovereignty. And thus far, I hope I have, in some measure, stated the Foundations of Civil Government, pursuant to the Established Laws of the Creation; and certainly when all Arguments and Circumstances are fairly laid together, there's no just ground or colour for *Original Compact*. Here's a manifest Power and trust, but it seems to be the immediate Ordinance and Appointment of God, arising from the Established Frame and order of Things; Not an Arbitrary Deputation or Commission, issuing forth of the hands of the People, that were born and formed for Government, and Educated and nursed up under the Wings of it. I have proved it from the nature of the Thing, and the Laws of Providence, and were we to enquire into the Original of Governments upon matter of Fact, we shall find them invested in the Paternal Power; indeed this Author is forced to confess

self as much, and then I think not upon a Tacit consent, or compact, as he would have it, no, the frame of Nature directs us to another foundation. And now I must own the Argument has carried me much further than I designed, but I think the injuries which these Notions offer to the Authority of Civil Governours, as well as Masters of Families; will dictate an Apology. I have studiously avoided all Applications, lest I should give him a Handle to make use of a Common Artifice against me, by resolving my Resentments into disloyalty, towards our present Sovereign; but this is an Imputation so unjust, that all that know me are, I question not, sufficiently prepared to wipe it off: For tho' I cannot entertain such an Opinion of Original Contract, as to be forward to place all my Loyalty upon it, yet I hope there are others as well as my self, can find out principles that will maintain as true fealty and Allegiance, towards his present Majesty, as that can suggest, or create.

## CHAP. XII.

*Of the Nature of Moral Good and Evil.*

**H**AVING thus laid the Foundations of the Law of Nature, and represented it in all its Formalities and Appendages, I proceed in the next place to consider the nature and distinction of Moral Good, and Evil. And first, That we may describe the nature of Moral Good with greater clearness, it will be requisite to consider not only the *Subject Matter*, but the *Formal Reasons* of it.

S. I. And first, The subject Matter of Moral Good undoubtedly arises from the natural frame and constitution of Things. As things in their Original Nature correspond, or agree with the Primitive ends, and Interests of each other, so they carry in them a Natural, or Physical goodness. Thus in the case of Temperance; a moderate use of Meats and Drinks, undoubtedly preserves the Mind, as well as Body in all its ends and uses: and consequently it is no doubt, a Natural, or Physical good to

to the whole Man. And this I would call the subject matter of Moral Good ; so that all Moral Good being founded in the Original Frame and Constitution of things, it always implies a Physical, or Natural Good in it. But,

*Secondly*, For the formal Reasons of Moral Good, I conceive they are principally two. The first is, whereby it seems to be immediately distinguished from a Natural Good ; and that is as it proceeds from the choices of a free Agent. And *Secondly*, As these choices are Regulated, according to the Original Frame, Nature, and Order of things. Thus in the case of Meats and Drinks, an unthinking Brute may, no doubt, receive such a portion of both, as is exactly accommodated to the Ends and Interests of such an Animal. But yet, since this is done purely by a necessary principle, or natural Instinct, it cannot derive to itself the denomination of a Moral Action ; but now when the moderate use of Meats and Drinks is defined upon a mature consideration of the ends and Interests of our beings, and we make 'em the measure of our choices, and embrace 'em as such ; the Action ob-

tains a new denomination; for 'tis certainly a Moral Action, and consequently a Moral Good, in as much as it moves upon the measures, and principles of a Natural Good.

It's certain, every action that is founded in rational Motives and Convictions, or that rests on certain Faculties which we are empowered to exert, or not exert in the disquisition of its Nature is to be esteemed a moral action, because the consequences of it are to be imputed to us. And if our choices, and determinations are Regulated according to the true nature of the thing, and the Primitive Ends and Interests of our Beings, it may justly be esteemed a moral Good; but if we choose, and determine contrary to these measures and principles, it will undoubtedly, pass under the character of a moral Evil; so that Moral Good manifestly includes two things, first it must contain all the principles of a free Action. Secondly, The Springs, and Principles of Freedom, are to move in conjunction with the natural Frame, and interests of the things themselves; and consequently, a Moral Good always presupposes, and includes a Natural Good. I'm sensible there



here are others that are not content with this portion of Moral-Good, and therefore they add a third Ingredient, from whence it chiefly takes its denomination. For they define it to be the Conformity of an Action to a Rule, or Decree of a Law-giver; and consequently it includes, first a principle of Freedom; secondly, a Natural Goodness, or an intrinsick Rectitude of the Action in all its relations; and thirdly, the binding Authority of a Law that engages us to embrace it from the Will and Pleasure of a Law-giver. But now if the Authority of a Law-giver, be the true measure of Moral Goodness, it makes a Moral Law, or Duty, and a Moral Good to be the same thing, whereas a Moral Law or Duty seems to be the Complement of a Moral Good. The one is a choice of things from their relation, and consent to Moral ends and purposes; the other, from a binding Authority superadded to them. In Moral Duties, the Law-giver is to prescribe in Conformity to these ends, and the Moral Agent is to choose, and determine himself by them, in Conformity to the Will, and Authority of the Law-giver, but a Moral Good seems to

be

be only the choice of a Natural Good, without considering it as the Command, or Appointment of a Sovereign Authority. But the denominations of things are often Arbitrary, and may be extended or lessened, without any injury to Truth, as long as the Latitude of such denominations is fixed, and agreed upon; and therefore, we ought not to be concerned at any Terms of Art, or Modes of Expression, as long as there's an Agreement in the nature of things.

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## CHAP. XIII.

### *Of the true measures of Moral Goodness.*

§. I. **I**N order to a further display of the nature of Moral Goodness, it will not be improper, nor useless to consider the true measure of Moral Goodness. And first, I think Pleasure, whether of Body or Mind, cannot be any true measure of Moral Goodness. Thus much the Observations already made on a Vitiating Mind abundantly evince.

For

For certainly a Vitiated Mind and Conscience may conceive an undisturbed Satisfaction; and delight in the foulest Enormities; and yet it's absurd to pronounce 'em Moral Goods.

For notwithstanding any pleasure of Mind that accompanies them, they are still to be ranked among Moral Evils. Indeed, I cannot conceive how Pleasure, and Pain can be the measure of Natural Good; for the Mind may certainly lie under wrong apprehensions of things, and consequently, conceive a pleasure, and satisfaction in real Evils; and therefore it seems to be highly improper to pronounce Pleasure, the true, and only measure of Natural, much more of Moral Good. No, certainly the true measure of Natural Good is to be taken from the Original Frame, and Constitution, or ends and interests of things, and the exact Agreement, or Adapting of them to each other, pursuant to it. When things are thus adapted, no doubt, but a true pleasure of Mind results from them, for God has so graciously adapted things to our Welfare and Happiness, and Established such a strict Harmony, and Agreement between us, and every Natural Good

Good that concerns us, that there's a powerful Pleasure flows from it, at least according to the Original Oeconomy, or Frame of things; but yet Pleasure seems to be a consequent rather than a measure, or constituent Principle of Natural Good, especially since there may arise this Pleasure of Mind, when the true ends and interests of things are perverted, witness the case of an Erroneous Judgment, or Conscience; and therefore I think, a late Author has not well expressed himself, when he tells us, *That things are Good, and Evil, only in Reference to Pleasure and Pain* [ *Essay concerning Human Understanding, Cap. 20. Sect. 2.* ] or as he more fully delivers himself in another place, *Good and Evil, are nothing but Pleasure and Pain, or that which occasions, or produces Pleasure, or Pain in us.* Book 2. Cap. 28. Sect. 5.

S. 2. Secondly, The conformity of our Actions to a Law abstracting from the Intrinsick rectitude of the Subject matter of it, cannot be the true measure of Moral Good. As the forecited Author too apparently suggests, when he tells us, *Moral Good and Evil, is only the conformity or disagreement of our Voluntary Actions*

*Actions to some Law; whereby Good and Evil, is drawn on us from the Will and Power of the Law-maker. Lib. 2. Cap. 28.*

§. 5. If this definition is designed thus far, certainly the best Argument against such a position is one by this Author advanced on another Occasion. He Labours to prove, that the foulest Enormities, have obtained in whole Nations and Societies of Men, upon a Law of Fashion, Opinion or Reputation; but certainly the conformity of an Action, to such a Law, can by no Means give it the Character or Denomination of Moral Good. This must indeed destroy all real Distinction between Good and Evil, and render the moral endowments of the Mind, as Arbitrary and Precarious as the outward Dress of the Body. It's true an Action performed by a voluntary Agent in Conformity to a Rule, is undoubtedly a Moral Action. But it does not hereby necessarily become a Moral Good, unless the Rule be good, or the Intrinsick matter of the Action be so: For without these Limitations it may be as much a Moral Evil, as if it interfered with an Established Rule. So that I cannot but dissent from Mr. *Lock*, when he places the Notion of Moral  
Good

Good and Evil, in the conformity or disagreement of a Voluntary Action to a Rule, tho' it be no more than a Rule or Law of Fashion. I grant it Establisheth the Idea of a Moral Action; but a Moral Action is either good or bad, and therefore the Idea of Moral Goodness, cannot rest upon the conformity of an Action to such a Rule, but on the Intrinsic Goodness of the Action or Rectitude of such a Rule.

§. 3. But to proceed; There are others who place the foundation of Moral Good, in the Conformity of Moral Actions, to our Rational Natures, as fitted for Society, and consequently proportion the degrees of Moral Good, as they serve more or less the ends of Society. Indeed it cannot be denied, but that the Great and Wise God, hath given us a being, and Nature not only peculiarly framed for Society, but to be supported by it; and consequently whatever accords with the Rational Nature of Man born to Society is undoubtedly a Moral Good; but 'tis visible Man in his Original Frame, bears a threefold Relation; to wit, Frame in Relation to God, his own Being, and that of his Neigh-

Neighbours; from whence arises a threefold Moral Good. Now the Agreement of Actions to our Rational Natures, as created for Society, may present us with an Idea of those Moral Goods, that respect our Being in it self, or as it stands supported by Society, but it cannot give us an Idea of Moral Good, with respect to God our Creator, and consequently this Notion cannot be an adequate measure of Moral Goodness.

§. 4. Having said thus much Negatively, it remains that we endeavour to State it in a positive way, or determine what is the true and adequate measure of Moral Goodness. And first, it's universally allowed that Moral Good implies a Relation in the Nature of it. It's a good in respect of something else, and consequently there must be some fixed Standard, to examine and state the Proportions it bears to it; and this Standard, may not improperly be called a measure of Moral Goodness. Again, Moral Good, which we are now concerned with, respects the Actions of Men; and since the Actions of Men, with respect to a Threefold Relation, which we bear towards God, our own Beings

Beings and our fellow Creatures, pass under three several Denominations, the measure of Moral Good, must extend to each of 'em. With Submission, then I presume the proper measure of Moral Good, must be taken from the Original Frame, Ends and Interests of our Beings; we are acted by invincible propensions, I mean those of self preservation and desire of happiness, that will engage us to examine and consider 'em, and the experiment will furnish us with a measure, to determine the Goodness of all our actions, in our several intercourses with God, our own Beings, or our fellow Creatures. It's certain there can no action be truly Morally Good but what is conformable to our Original Frame, and the prime Ends and Interest of our Beings; and what is really thus conformable, is really and truly Morally Good; and consequently the Frame, Ends, and Interest of our Being, must be a proper Standard of Moral Goodness. God has been graciously pleased, to give us a Being like himself, the great exemplar of all Perfection and Goodness, and he has annexed such Ends and Interests to it, as will lay a Foundation for Actions, that



that results from his blessed Nature; so that the whole line of Moral Duty is by the Laws of our Creation, made to consist in Actions that are peculiarly consonant to our Natural Frame, in all its Capacities and Relations. The Features, and Complexion of every duty, are taken from our selves, and by a Physical Efficiency, add Glory, Strength and Beauty to us; and therefore nothing can be so true a measure of Moral Goodness, as the pure Frame, Ends, and Interests of our Beings. As for those that place Moral Goodness, in the conformity of our Actions to a Law; it's certain that the Truth and Authority of this Law, where Revelation is wanting, must first be tryed by the Frame, Ends, and Interests of our Beings: Reason can make an estimate no other way; and consequently all other measures of Moral Goodness, must at last resolve into this.

## CHAP. XIV.

*Of the Eternal and Unalterable distinctions of Moral Goodness.*

**F**ROM what has been laid down and Concluded, it's evident there's an unalterable distinction between Good and Evil. Now certainly whereinssoever we fix the Notion of Moral Good, whether 'tis the imbracing of a Natural Good, by Rational motives and convictions arising from the Intrinsick Nature of the Thing, the proper Springs of a free Agent; or whether 'tis in pursuance to the Will and Authority of a Lawgiver, it's abundantly concluded, the Lines of Moral Good are fixed and unalterable: For it's manifest that Moral Good, always includes a Natural Good, and Natural Good is evidently Established in the frame of Created Nature, and consequently if the frame of Nature is unalterable, Moral Good must be so too. Nay, we may advance further yet; the great creator of all things, tho' in himself the most absolute, and free Agent, yet was governed by the dictates

dictates of his own Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, and consequently the whole frame of created Nature is Established according to the model of the divine perfections. If therefore Natural Good necessarily results from the Natural frame of Things; and their subserviency and agreements with each other, and Moral Good necessarily includes a Natural Good in it, Moral as well as Natural Goodness, is as unalterable as the divine Perfections; and consequently is in the highest sense eternal, and unalterable. From hence we may observe how monstrously absurd is that position advanced by a set of Men, who first outlived all Moral Good, before they thought of the Notion, that there's no distinction between Good and Evil; that all the Impressions of the Mind, are to be resolved into mere Habits Established in Example, or Education, and consequently the Good and Evil of all Actions besides that which results from the Determination of positive Laws, whether Humane or Divine, is nothing else but a Law of Fashion or Opinion. It's abundantly concluded, God has given us a peculiar Frame, and thereby Established certain Ends, and Interests suitable to it:

And consequently what really accords with the true Ends, and Interests of our Being, is that we call a Natural Good, and what directly clashes and interferes with them, is a Natural Evil. It's concluded God has endued us with powers and faculties that, if duely exerted, will discover to us the true Frame, Ends and Interests of our Natures, and how all external things affect 'em, and are more or less Subservient to 'em; and after this he has endued us with a power, to chuse and pursue what is truly Subservient to these ends. The very frame and condition of our Natures, as they are to be supported with outward succours and conveniencies, and the sense of pleasure and pain stampt upon our Natures, and the desire of the one, and satisfaction in enjoying it; and the dread of the other, and the uneasiness in suffering it, are proper and effectual Springs to set all our natural Powers on work, and fix 'em on their proper Ends and Objects; and all this proves a moral Capacity, to pursue and embrace that which we call *Moral Good*, and unless our Natural Powers and Faculties are regulated by the Laws and Principles of natural Good, it's impossible

ble the Action should obtain the Character of moral Good. It must be confessed, that the bias of *Animal* sensations, or pleasures, is so impetuous in corrupted nature, that it often hurries us on to the pursuit of every thing that strikes a present Relish, without considering whether it accords with the true Ends and Interests of our Beings, at least in that measure or manner we seek to enjoy them. Again, it's possible the Mind, by force of Habit, as well as power of Education, and the Fashion of a Country, may be sunk so deep into Carnality, and so tinged with brutal Enjoyments, as to be not only disabled from making the least Enquiry into the true Ends and Interests of its Being, but to receive an undisturbed Satisfaction in the practice of 'em, so that they may appear as natural as the most regulated Acts of Morality, yet this does by no means destroy the Foundations of moral Good; for it is nothing else but a kind of Spiritual Disease; and consequently we may as well say there was originally no true Foundations for Health, because the Body is over-run with a Disease, as deny the Foundations of Morality, because our Native Capacities

cities are habitually Vitiated and Corrupted.

## CHAP. XV.

### Reflections on Mr. Lock's Law of Fashion.

§. 9. **H**AVING offered thus much upon the Nature and Distinction of Moral Goodness, I cannot dismiss the Argument without bestowing a few Remarks on the Author of the Essay, concerning *Humane Understanding*, upon his advancing a Law of Fashion, or Opinion, among the Rules, or Measures, of Moral Goodness. I shall not conceal what he has said in Vindication of himself against Mr. Lowde, [See his Ep. to the Reader Ed. 2.] I was there not laying down Moral Rules, but shewing the Original and Nature of Moral Ideas, and enumerating the Rules Men make use of in Moral Relations, whether those Rules were true or false. Now certainly tho' the principal Design of this Chapter might be what this Author expresses; yet an Impartial Reader could not have believed but there was

a professed Design too, to represent the true rules, or measures, of Moral Good, had he not expressly declared the contrary. And for all this, I think a man must have a great deal of Charity to alter his Belief, notwithstanding this extorted Declaration. And to justify my Opinion, I shall appeal to that very Section which he refers to for his Vindication [Sect. 4. Chap. 28. B. 2.] speaking of Moral Duties, or Actions, viz. Gratitude, &c. he concludes, *It is not enough to have clear and distinct Ideas of them, and to know what Names belong to such and such Combinations of Ideas, as make up the complex Idea belonging to such a Name, we have a further and greater Concernment, and that is to know whether such Actions so made up are morally Good, or Bad.* Now, truly if the great concernment be to know or discover whether certain Actions are Morally Good or Bad, the true Nature of Moral Good must be fixed; for, if it be not material, whether the Rule or Measure be true or false; I would fain know what Light we have given of Moral Good, or how we shall judge whether any particular action is Morally Good or Bad. Thus far there's a design to fix the true mea-

sures of Moral Goodness, and we are the  
 more induced to believe it, because the  
 very next Section presents us with a pro-  
 fessed description of *Morally Good and  
 Evil*, pursuant to the description he had  
 before given of Good and Evil. *Morally  
 Good and Evil* then is only the *Conformity  
 or Disagreement of our Voluntary Actions*  
*to some Law*; whereby Good and Evil is  
 drawn upon us, from the Will and Power of  
 the Law-maker. Here's a standing defi-  
 nition of Moral Good and Evil, and  
 this Author must own that a definition  
 of Things, (such as Good and Evil) is  
 a discovery of the precise Nature of 'em,  
 as they are in themselves, and conse-  
 quently it must imply a discovery of the  
 true measures of *Morally Good and Bad*.  
 To proceed then, the Nature of *Morally  
 Good and Bad*, is here made to consist  
 in the conformity of Voluntary Actions  
 to some Law, and therefore it's requisite  
 an Account should be given of the sever-  
 al Rules or Laws of Moral Goodness,  
 whereby we may view it in its several  
 Species or kinds. This Mr. Lock per-  
 forms in the Section immediately fol-  
 lowing. Of these Moral Rules and Laws  
 to which Men generally Refer, and by which  
 they judge of the Rectitude or Pravity of  
 their



their Actions there, seems to me to be three sorts, with their different Enforcements or Rewards and Punishments, so that we see he industriously represents 'em in all the formalities of Laws, and gives 'em their proper and peculiar Sanctions, that they may obtain the Authority and Character of Laws. Upon this, he proceeds to establish the several Species of Moral Good; and having enlarged very much upon the third Species of Moral Good, that of Virtue and Vice, he gives us to understand his Intentions by the very Title of his Thirteenth Section. *These three Laws are Rules of Moral Good and Evil*, and Sect 14. he expressly tells us, *That by taking the Rule from the Fashion of the Country, the Mind hath a notion of Moral Goodness or Evil, which is the conformity, or not conformity, of any action to that Rule.* Now what is all this, but to describe the real Nature of Moral Goodness in its true measures, as well as kinds. It's evident, it was the Business of Sect. 5. and the rest Branches from it by the Laws of method and order; nay, it's expressed in the very Conclusion, Sect. 14. and therefore we cannot (without robbing Mr. Lock of the

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Character he has justly merited of being a Master of Reason) but conclude, that all this was in pursuance to his Great Concernment, Sect. 4. *That is, to know whether such actions so made up, are morally Good or Bad.* But further to take off all this, Mr. Lock appeals to Sect. 15. 20. Whereas the latter only affirms, that we have a notion of Moral Relation, whether the Rule be true or false; and this I think no body can deny, but yet I hope I have proved, that the notion of all Moral Goodness, depends on the truth of the Rule, not on the conformity of an Action, to a Rule, whether true or false. The former affirms, that the Idea, or Notion, of Moral Goodness, arises from the conformity of an Action to one of his three Rules, but I hope, I have proved that they only represent the Idea of a Moral Action, not of Moral Goodness, which indispensibly requires the truth and goodness of the Rule. Lastly, in vindication of himself, he produces his own Authorities for the eternal and unalterable nature of Virtue, by fixing it in the Will or Commands of God, Book 1. Chap. 3. Sect. 6. and 18. But yet we were at a loss, to know whether he

be designed the revealed Will and positive Commands of God, or his Will discovered by the Light of Reason, had he not told us in a second Edition, *That by the Divine Law, he meant as well a Law promulg'd by the Light of Reason, as the voice of Revelation*, Book 2. Chap. 28. Sect. 8. If the Commands or Will of God are only those we receive from Revelation, or the positive Will of God (the first Edition of this Essay, suggesting nothing to the contrary) then Moral Good and evil Antecedent to Revelation, is not Eternal and Unalterable, but may be founded on a Law of fashion, as a true measure of Moral Good; for as this Author observes, the natural conveniences, and inconveniences of things themselves, may determine our choices, without making 'em the inviolable Rules of Practice. See Sect. 6. Book 1. Chap. 3. and Sect. 6. 2. Chap. 28. So that however, his second Thoughts stand affected, I can see nothing in his first, to induce a belief that he did not intend to state the several measures of Moral Goodness, and consequently assign a Law of opinion for one of them. I have hitherto asserted nothing, but from Arguments which

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Mr. *Lock's* own Words have furnished me with ; and if I have carried him beyond his Intentions, I'm perswaded the remarks are justifiable, whilst the old expressions remain to propagate the Infection, at least in every incautious Reader, that has not perused his Preface ; for certainly, since in the entrance of this Essay, he has brought the foulest Enormities, under the Character of a Law of Fashion or Opinion, *Book 1. Chap. 3. Sect. 9, 10, 11.* he either ought to have cancelled most of those passages I have cited, or at least expressly declared, that a Law of Opinion was never to be admitted a measure of Moral Good, unless the Opinion is exactly consonant to truth, or the nature of things ; nor a rule of Action, but as it corresponds with the Law of Nature, or revealed Religion.

§. 2. Having said thus much, give me leave to offer something concerning the necessity of advancing such a Law. Now certainly, in order to the Description of Moral Goodness, or the several Branches of it, there's not the least necessity, for bringing a Law of Fashion into the List. I hope, I may  
with,

Without Arrogance or Presumption, conclude from what has been already offered, that Moral Goodness is indisputably founded on the Truth or Goodness of the Rule, or the intrinsic Goodness of the things themselves; and that neither the Sentiments or Opinions of Men, nor the Fashion of a Country without these Requisites, can give 'em so much as the bare Denominations of Moral Goodness; and therefore that a Law of Fashion, should be advanced as a Rule, to represent the Nature of Moral Goodness, can never be fairly accounted for. It's certain the Law of Nature, or at least the Law of Revelation in conjunction with it, is the only measure of Moral Goodness: Insomuch, that a Law of Fashion interfering with one or both of 'em, is not only destitute of every grain of Moral Goodness, but cannot cancel one grain of sin or guilt, when followed in opposition to either. This is the case of Duels, or any other fashionable Enormities; for Laws of Nature, as well as revealed Laws, when duly promulged, are justly presumed to be the known fundamental Rules of Humane Actions, and the fashion or publick reputation of an Action, can add

add nothing towards its innocence. And therefore what necessity is there for inferring a Law of Fashion among the Rules or Measures of Moral Goodness, unless it were designed to establish something of Credit or Authority to it; things no sooner suggested, than embraced in an Age of Liberty; and therefore this Author should no sooner have mentioned such a Rule, than represented the unwarrantableness of it. In a word, this Author might have considered, that he had given the grossest Immoralities, the Authority of Laws of Fashion, and consequently, that such Laws are very unfit representatives of the Ideas of Moral Goodness, certainly it had been as allowable, and necessary, to have brought an avowed Immorality into the List, given it the Character and Authority of a Law, and pronounced it a measure of *Virtue*, or *Moral Rectitude*, or *Goodness*, or at least a Branch of it. But truly, this is a method that rather confounds, than establishes the Ideas of Moral Goodness, or instructs us to know whether such Actions so made up, are morally Good or Bad. Indeed, had he condescended to an old Distinction of Good and Evil, and pronounced Moral Good or Evil either

either apparent or real, and Virtue and Vice reputed or real, then he had put himself under a necessity of enlarging very plentifully upon a Law of Fashion, and abundantly freed himself from Censure and Reflection, especially, upon an express Declaration of the unwarrantableness of such a Law, when destitute of real intrinsick Goodness or Innocence; but till this is done, I hope, 'tis no crime to pronounce Mr. *Lock's* Law of Fashion (as it now stands Recorded) both dangerous and unnecessary.

§. 3. But further, besides the danger and frivolousness of the attempt, this Author seems to have grossly mis-represented the old received Notions of Virtue and Vice, brought disgrace upon the Ancient Moralists or Philosophers, and established a Law upon sanctions peculiar to it, that were never esteemed so. And first, it cannot be denied, but that Custom and Example have always been very prevailing Arguments, to influence the Judgments, as well as practice of Mankind, and when Practice is not only universal, but pursued, abetted, and encouraged by Authority, it will presently be

be received into the judgments of Men, as an indisputable Rule of Action; and when 'tis thus received, it becomes a Law or Rule of Action, and thus Custom and Example accidentally contribute to the establishing a Rule, as they gradually new model the Judgment, and serve to create a real persuasion of the intrinsic goodness of any particular Action; but yet I can scarce believe that Custom, publick Reputation, or the Fashion of a Countrey, were ever assigned by the intelligent part of Mankind, for the measure of the Rectitude of a Rule, much less for a true and proper Rule of Action; no, an Opinion of the Intrinsic Rectitude of things has been ingendered by Habit or Custom, and the fashionable practices of an Age, and then the Action has been pursued and embraced with as much Heat and Eagerness, as if it were endowed with an Intrinsic Goodness, and were to be ranked under the Title of Moral Goodness. And therefore, this Author, has offered Violence to the notions of Mankind, and particularly of the Ancient Moralists and Philosophers, in pronouncing the Fashion of a Countrey to be a Law, and founding

Virtue



Virtue and Vice upon it. For first it can be no Law on this Author's own principles, since it wants a peculiar Sanction to enforce it. It's well known, Praise, Honour, or Reputation, is by no means peculiar to a Law of Fashion; for 'tis the reward that attends all sorts of Moral Goodness, or a Collateral Motive contrived by divine designation to enforce the practice of it. 2dly, Virtue and Vice among the Learned, was never measured by the Reputation it bears in the World, but by an Intrinsic Moral Rectitude. This I could evince were it necessary, from the whole tribe of Heathen Moralists, who always fixed the Notion in its Agreements, with the dictates of right Reason, and the Original Frame, Ends, and Interests of our Natures. I shall at this time content myself with some Authorities, from that Learned Moralist he has cited to support his own Opinion. Thus he agrees to these great Truths in a Multitude of passages: *Virtutis hoc proprium, earum rerum quæ secundum Naturam sunt, habere delectum.* Lib. 3. de Fin. Sect. 4. *Quæ sita enim virtus est, non quæ relinqueret naturam, sed quæ rueretur,* lb. Lib. 4. §. 15. *In homine Summa omnis Animi est, & in Animo Ra-*

*tionis, ex qua virtus est, quæ Rationis Absolutio definitur. Ib. Lib. 5. §. 14. Virtus eadem in homine ac Deo est, — est autem Virtus nihil aliud quam perfecta & ad Summum perducta natura; est igitur homini cum Deo similitudo. Lib. de Leg. §. 8.*

So that Vertue was never esteemed that precarious Thing this Author has Suggested; the publick Reputation of any Action was never the measure of Vertue, but Right Reason, and the Frame, Ends and Interests of our Beings, else it's impossible Vertue in Men, should be the same with Vertue in God, and Men to resemble God in it, as this Author excellently expresses himself.

From all this it's manifest, that Vertue was rather esteemed the Standard or Measure of Praise, than Praise of Vertue, and that Honour or Praise, was never extolled or appealed to, but as it is the Product of Vertue, and a kind of reward to it. Thus much this Author could not be Ignorant of, when the Moralist explains the very passage he has cited almost with the same Breath; and makes it a description of the chiefest Humane Good, that consists in Vertue or is attained by it. *Quod ipsum sit optandum per se, à Virtute profectum*

profectum vel in ipsa virtute situm, sua sponte laudabile. Tusc. Quæst. lib. 2. §. 20. If this will not content him, I shall refer him to another passage that speaks out what I have already asserted, and will instruct him that Vertue is the Measure of Praise, not Praise of Vertue. *Omnis honos, omnis admiratio, omne studium ad virtutem, & ad eas actiones quæ virtuti sunt consentaneæ, refertur: Eaque omnia quæ aut ita in animis sunt, aut ita geruntur, uno nomine honesta dicuntur.* Lib. 5 de Fin. §. 21. This, if I mistake not, is to define Honour by Vertue, not Vertue by Honour or Reputation, as Mr. Lock would have it. Upon the whole then I presume, it appears that this Law of Opinion, has no more foundation in the received principles of Morality, than there's necessity for the invention; that it practises as much injustice, upon the ancient Advocates for Morality, as it discovers Impertinence or Evil design in the Author, and in a Word, it's so miserably destitute of Solid Argument, or Principle to support it, that nothing but the fashionable Immoralities of a degenerate Age, can assert its truth or Authority.

## C H A P. XVII

*Of the Nature of Conscience in General.*

I Shall not much enlarge on the Notion of Conscience, which imports the knowledge of the Line of Duty, and a directing Power or Faculty, to consider the Nature of those Actions we are about to execute, by applying 'em to the Line of Duty. This is a truth so well known, that no one can dispute it, that allows the use of Reason, or make us creatures that can act by a Law, or are capable of being Governed by it. The principal enquiry then is concerning Conscience with respect to past Actions: And first it's a truth, I presume, universally agreed upon, that Man is endued with a Power of Retaining, and reflecting on his own actions; The retentive Faculty is abundantly maintained upon the Power of Memory, and the Power of Reflection is founded in the very Power of Reason. For to Reflect and Animadvert upon our thoughts, is undoubtedly an Act of Reason, and Thought. And therefore

as Man acts upon Thought, Deliberation, and Argument, he cannot but be conscious that he thinks, deliberates, and argues, and consequently that he acts pursuant to it. Indeed, I presume, to think, deliberate, and Act, and to consider or know that we think, deliberate, or act thus<sup>or</sup> and thus, are two distinct acts of the Mind; but whether we think, and deliberate, and reflect upon our Thoughts in the same, or different Moments, is no way prejudicial to the Doctrine of Consciousness. To proceed then as we can reflect, so we can animadvert upon the nature of past Actions; for those very faculties that enable us to deliberate, and judge of the Nature of an Action, before it is executed, will enable us to pass as clear, if not much better judgment upon it, after 'tis over: For then we view it in all its Aspects, Circumstantials, and Appendages. Now certainly Conscience contains both these Powers in it; I mean a Power of Recollecting and a Power of Animadverting on the Nature of our past Actions; for without such inspecting Powers, it's impossible there can be any such thing as Conscience. But then that which gives us the principal and

formal Notion of Conscience, is a Power of trying the Nature of our Actions, by some Law or Rule of Action. Whatever the Nature of Moral Good and Evil may be; I mean whether it consists in the conformity of our Actions to a Law or Rule, or their disagreement from it, certain I am the Acts or Powers of Conscience imply the examination of an Action with reference to a Law or indispensable Rule of Action; whereby it carries the appearance of a Duty or not a Duty. For Conscience undoubtedly implies a Condemning and absolving Faculty in it, and these are exercised with respect to Duty, and Duty arises from the Obligation of a Law: So that Conscience is undoubtedly the measure of our Actions by a Law. Indeed, this is so much the formal Notion of Conscience, that it runs thro' all the instances, and exercitations of Consciences; for they are no otherwise distinguished than by the different Laws that Regulate them, as from a Law of Nature, Law of Revelation, or Civil Polity. But then in order to the passing an Absolution or Censure on our Actions, and our selves for them by a Rule, there must be a Power of Acting Con-  
formable

formable to this Law or Rule; for without this, the Action with its Effects and Consequences, cannot be imputed to us. This is implied in the very notion of a Law, being a Rule proposed to Rational Creatures that have a Power to Act, or not Act on Rational Motives, and Convictions; so that Conscience contains a great many different movements, or workings in it. *First*, A Power of Retaining. *Secondly*, A Power of Animadverting, or Reflecting on past Actions. *Thirdly*, A Power of applying, and comparing them with a Law or Rule. *Fourthly*, A Power of discerning the Truth, Goodness, or Equity of the Rule, *Fifthly*, The Obligation and Authority of it; and *Lastly*, A Power of ascribing the Action to our selves, by acknowledging a Power of Acting in Conformity to this Rule; whereby the Good, or Evil, Guilt or Merit of the Action may be some way imputed to us. So that Conscience may be justly defined to be the Judgment we pass upon our own Actions, whether past, or present; as scanned and measured by a Law. But now, tho' a Law in general is assigned for the measure of Conscience, it can-

not be imagined that every thing we fantasie, or are pleased to assign for the mark, or scope of our Actions, must pass for the true Law, or Measure of Conscience. It's certain, Custom, Education, Example, or the Reputation of an Action gained by Numbers, and a Loose, Degenerous Age, cannot be a Law, or Measure of Conscience. No, the Passions, Prejudices, or By-interests of particular Persons, the Superstitious Fears, Enthusiasm, or Diabolical Suggestions of too many, may as well challenge the Character of Laws, as any that have yet been mentioned. But to determine this matter in a few words. If we enquire into the true measure of Conscience, according to its Original Frame ; it's certain, the Law of God, whether Natural, or Reveald, is to be esteemed the only proper measure. For none but a Sovereign Creator can be the Lord of Conscience, all other Powers, and Authorities, being only special Deputations from him ; and that Duty, and Obligation that results from their Laws, rest upon a Divine Deputation that gives being to their Character, as well as Authority.



CHAP. XVII.

Reflections on Mr. Lock's Description  
of Conscience.

THE Nature of Conscience being thus stated, I cannot but reflect a little on Mr. Lock's Account of Conscience, when he tells us, *That it is nothing else but our own Opinion of our own Actions, and this Opinion founded in a Persuasion, however got, as from Education, Company, or the Customs of a Country.* See Lib. 1. Chap. 3. §. 8. This, to speak the least, I think, is a very loose, and imperfect Definition of Conscience. And to say, *'Tis nothing else but an Opinion however got*; seems to suggest, as if God had Instituted no fixed Rule of Conscience, but that it is to be resolved into little else but Custom, Company, and Education. In a word, it's a Description calculated, purely for an Erroneous Conscience, that has no other Foundation but present Convictions, whether true or false. I will not deny, but that an erroneous, vitia-

vitiated Conscience, is in a large sense,  
 stiled Conscience, and that Custom, or  
 Education may give being to such a  
 Conscience; but then it's in Scripture  
 distinguished by the Denominations of a  
*weak, or defiled Conscience.* I will grant,  
 that it is a measure of Action to those  
 that labour under it; because, as God  
 has formed us Reasonable Creatures, we  
 are to Act upon Rational Motives, and  
 Convictions. He has given us no o-  
 ther measure of Action as Men, and  
 therefore the present Light, or Convi-  
 ctions we are under, are the immediate  
 Springs, and Principles of Action: for  
 to Act Blindfold, or without Reason,  
 or in contradiction to it, must over-  
 turn the Frame of our Beings, and the  
 Practice of all Moral Vertue. But yet  
 God has set a sufficient mark upon an  
 erroneous Conscience, by charging Sin on  
 the Error, where-ever a Man can be charg-  
 ed with Neglect as to the means of Infor-  
 mation. On this Account St. Paul as-  
 sures us, that the *impure*, or those that  
 are under an erroneous Conscience, are  
*Polluted as well in Mind, as Conscience.*  
*Tit. 1, 15.* So that an erroneous Con-  
 science being never a direct Rule, at  
 least not any of God's Forming; nay,  
 being

being a Rule occasioned by our selves, that enhances our Guilt, rather than Merit; it is not but in a very improper and extended Sence to pass under the Denomination of Conscience, at least, without some distinguishing Characteristick annexed, that the Divine Oeconomy of Conscience may not suffer by it. I am sure it is Conscience founded on the true Law, or Rule of Conscience, according to the Divine Establishment of it, that this Author should have Animadverted on, as a proof of Innate Ideas, not a Fictitious Conscience: And certainly it is a very imperfect account of such a Conscience, to affirm, that in the true, and proper Sence of it, it is nothing but our own Opinion of our own Actions, tho got by Custom, Company, or Education; certainly the Foundation of Conscience ought not to have been omitted, which arises from the Conformity of our Actions to the proper Rule, or Law of Conscience, the Law of God.

CHAP.

## C H A P. XVIII.

*Of the Foundation, and Authority of  
Natural Conscience in the original  
Oeconomy of it.*

**H**AVING offered thus much concern-  
ing the Nature of Conscience,  
we may easily represent the Foundation,  
and Authority of natural Conscience.  
By Natural Conscience, I mean a Con-  
science that exerts it self in a State of  
Nature antecedent to a State of Reve-  
lation. And certainly there's a Con-  
science Established by God upon an un-  
alterable Foundation, even in this State.  
For it's already concluded, that Man in  
his Original Frame is capable of Acting  
by certain Established Rules; It's con-  
cluded, that these Rules are discovered  
to him, as the special Institution of  
God, binding them upon him as his  
proper Laws, and indispensable Mea-  
sures of Action; It's concluded, that  
God has Created him with a Power of  
applying all his Actions to a Rule, and  
a Power of Judging whether his Actions  
accord with, or deviate from this Rule,  
and

and a Power of adjudging himself accountable to God, for the violation of this Rule, and consequently a necessity of acquitting or condemning himself by this Rule. In a Word, it's concluded that these Rules are eternal, and unalterable, being founded in the Original Frame, Ends and Interests of Created Nature; therefore since these are Truths established upon the clearest Evidence, and Convictions, there's a natural Conscience resulting from the Frame of our Beings, and founded upon the most uniform, and unalterable Measures and Principles. It's visible God has framed us as exquisitely apprehensive of the violation of the Line of Duty, and of being accountable to him for it, as sensible of Torment and Misery; So that the workings of Conscience can never be destroyed; they will unavoidably break in upon us at one time or other, and fill us with Horror and Confusion. Tho' it cannot be denied, but that Habit, and Custom may engender a false Light, or Sense of Things; and consequently a false conscience, either by mistaking the Nature, and Composition of our Actions, or the Rules of em; by making a false application, or a false Rule;

Rule; yet it's concluded there's a Conscience Eftablished in the Original Frame or Nature of Things, and tho' it may for some time be fuppreffed or ftifled, yet we can never fecure it from returning upon us.

## CHAP. XIX.

*The Truth and certainty of Conscience  
Demonftrated againſt the Latitudi-  
narian and Unbeliever.*

**N**OW certainly if what has been already asserted carries force and evidence in it, there needs nothing more to discover the falſhood, nor to ſay Senſeleſs Impudence of a prevailing poſition, That Conſcience is nothing elſe but certain Superſtitious Fears, contracted and riverted by the Power of Education; for it's viſible the Laws of Conſcience are an Inſtitution of God himſelf, as certain and unalterable, as the diſtinctions of Good and Evil; nay as certain and unalterable, as the Frame, and Order of Nature. It's true there is one thing

thing which the Libertine may retreat to, to blast or disparage the Truth and Reality of Conscience. I mean the inconsistency and contradiction of erroneous vitiated Consciences. For since Conscience sometimes as visibly discovers it self in the espousal and defence of open Immoralities, as the strictest virtues; and of palpable Falshoods and Errors, as the clearest Truths; it's with some colour concluded that Conscience is only the Effects of Habit, Custom and Education, Working the Mind up to certain Superstitious Sentiments and Opinions. But certainly the mistake is obvious, for this is an Argument that in reality proves no more, than that the mind is capable of receiving false Notions of Things, and espousing 'em as real Truths, and unquestionable Rules of Action. If this be admitted there's no necessity for discarding the Divine Economy or Institution of Natural Conscience, unless we must deny or reject every Divine Ordinance, because it was not established above the Possibility of violence, or distortion. It may easily be granted that the Mind or Understanding may be warped, or moulded to the reception of very absurd Opinions and

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Notions;

Notions; there are a great many concurring causes that conspire to the implanting such habits; there are vicious appetites and propensions that carry a fatal bias over all our Motions or Actions; there are examples and the fashion of an Age, which (once falling in with Native vicious propensions) will turn the Scale against the clearest Arguments and Convictions; so as to enforce a Practice contrary to received Sentiments and Opinions; and Practice engenders into habit, and at the same time Establisheth a Powerful Familiarity; and Familiarity takes off the unnaturalness or incongruity of Things, and by tract of time represents 'em to the Mind, as highly agreeable and innocent; so that it's possible a cultivated mind may be totally Debauched and Corrupted, that a pure Conscience may become defiled; and a regulated judgment perverted. The Force of habit may reconcile contradictions; the exorbitance of Lusts may send forth such Vapours as will suffocate not only the natural but improved light of the understanding. But the case of uncultivated Nations is highly convincing, where enormities become the Subject of Education, and

are



are infused as Rules of Action from the very first dawnings of Reason. Native lust, and irregular appetites may do much to cramp and fetter the Mind, or Reason, to that degree as to suppress all Soliman enquiries into the nature of Things, and consequently oblige her to determine according to the Suggestions and Impulse of Sense; but when vicious propensions, and parental instructions are mixed and twisted in with each other, and a People neither see nor hear of any thing but the depravities of Nature, no wonder if a Judgment of Conscience pursuant to it is established (at least while Lust keeps the Ascendant) and that too as resolute and inflexible, as the most pure and regulated Conscience. I must confess it's a received Maxim among the Schools, that in Actions that are *de prima dictamine naturæ*, the Conscience cannot err, but is always correct and regular, and on this account it was pronounced *Habitus naturalis & innatus*. But I can discover no just foundation for this assertion, especially since Scripture, as well as Experience, seems to warrant the contrary; for St. Paul dictates no less, when he describes the state of the

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Heathen World; Having the Understanding darkned, being alienated from the Life of God thro' the Ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who being past feeling have given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness. But now after all this, the Original Laws of Conscience may be thus shamefully subverted, and a false Conscience frequently erected in the room of that which God has instituted, yet it is abundantly demonstrated it rests upon immutable foundations. There's a Conscience which has neither Custom, nor Education, for its Creator, but that God that made the Heavens; it's founded in the immutable counsels of infinite Wisdom, and has the same frame and establishment with Nature it self. Let the *Latitudinarian* consider this, and every mouth shall be stopped. Let him consider, that as 'tis perfect demonstration that God has established an unalterable Oeconomy of Conscience, so he'll be infinitely concerned to assert the Power and Authority of it; and th' the exorbitance of his Lusts have bobbed his Judgment, and buoyed him up into a Perswasion, that Conscience is a mere *Chimera*, or State,

or Church-Engine, to reduce the multitude to a servile Obedience; and, in a word, tho' the Power and Authority of this persuasion has carried him on to the most execrable Impieties without reluctancy, or remorse; yet he may assure himself that the Divine Economy of Conscience will one day be restored, and tho' want of means of Information (where there's room for a just Plea of this nature) may silence the loud cries of it, yet he may assure himself it will exert in proportion to every neglect of means with all imaginable vigour and fury, upon every unrepenting Sinner, and then he'll find those superstitious empty Fears will prove real Accusations, to condemn him to an irrevocable state of Misery.

## C H A P. XX.

*The uneasiness of Mind under Sickness,  
and the approaches of Death, resolv-  
ed into the Gripes and Convulsions  
of Conscience.*

**H**AVING thus discovered the primi-  
tive Oeconomy of Natural Con-  
science, it gives us an opportunity to  
account for those Insults, those Gripes,  
and Convulsions it makes upon the dis-  
solute at the approach of death, or in  
time of Sickness. I'm sensible that in  
endeavouring to assert a despised No-  
tion, that has been often resolved into  
a mere dejection of Spirits, an *Hypo-  
chondriacal flatus*, or certain superstiti-  
ous unreasonable fears impressed by the  
force of education. These are indeed  
very plausible colours and suggestions,  
to a mind that is steeped and impreg-  
nated with the over-flowings of Lust.  
But before this opinion can obtain cre-  
dit and admission, the Authors of it are  
indispensibly obliged to prove, that God  
has not Originally established a Con-  
science upon certain unalterable mea-  
sures,

tures, and principles. But instead of this, it has already been sufficiently demonstrated, that Conscience hath the same Foundation, and Original with that of our Beings. It had its Birth, and Authority in the same Act, that made us reasonable Creatures, and free Agents; and therefore if upon a review of past Actions; Remonstrances arise by comparing 'em with a Rule that answers the true Ends and Interests of our Beings, all the reason in the World, will oblige us to conclude, that they are nothing but the returns of Natural Conscience. What tho' a contrary Conscience was Erected, acting upon the strongest Perswasions, or Convictions, yet it must now be allowed, that it is founded in Violence, and consequently the Mind is under a possibility of returning to right notices, and apprehensions. And certainly the present case affords the highest probabilities for the truth of the supposition. For first it must be confessed whilst Lust and exorbitant Appetites maintain their Ground, a Biassed Judgment at least cannot escape being chained to their Interest, but these seem to depend upon the Health and Vigour of the Animal part. As

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this is shocked, or enervated, whether thro' Age or sickness, so these must decline and suffer Disgrace. And therefore as the heat of Lust expires, so the Judgment or Understanding will in proportion be discharged from her Fetters, she will view things with a new aspect, not thro' the Steams of Lust, and as it were thro' a Glass darkly, but Face to Face, and in their naked Shapes and Features, and consequently our Reflections on past Actions will be formed upon new Measures and Principles, she'll be able to discern the true Ends and Interests of Humane Nature, and thereupon bring all her Actions to the Test of this Rule; and this cannot fail to beget new Persuasions and Convictions, according to the primitive Oeconomy of Conscience; so that it is not a fit of Melancholy, the effect of depauperated Spirits, no otherwise than a an expiring Vapour is the cause of Light, which before it obstructed; but the returns of Natural Conscience acted upon a right Basis, and exerting it self according to that frame in which it was created. Thus much the *Latitudinarian* may discern from the Natural efficacy of Things. But besides all this he may  
very

very well allow this wonderful change, to be in some measure compleated, by the concurrence of supernatural causes. If God upon a long train of unrelenting impiety, has at last consigned a Man over to irretrievable destruction, I would fain know why he may not suffer the Devil, or some of his Spiritual Crew, to display before his Mind a Scheme of his past Actions. No one can question but that Order of Spirits can converse with Spirits, or make their applications to a Spiritual Being, and consequently that he can, if permitted, excite such Motions, and suggest such Ideas, as will revive the most considerable minutes of our whole Lives, and enable us to bring 'em to a new Test, and view 'em in their proper Lincaments and proportions; and consequently as they appear to clash with the Line of Duty, plunge a Soul into the most direful Agonies and Convulsions. This is but a kind of Anticipation of that future misery, which I'm confident he will be the Instrument to enhance upon all Reprobate Sinners. But on the other hand, if the patience and long-suffering of God, extends to the leading a Soul to repentance, who can dispute the Divine Influences of the

Holy Spirit, in bringing all past Actions to our remembrance. He can discover such minute circumstances as will recover lost Ideas. He can excite such Meditations and Thoughts, as will suggest the true Rule of Action, and Line of Duty, and consequently such as will necessitate the Mind to persevere on every Action pursuant to it. It's an Undisputed Truth that the Holy Spirit can move and excite the Powers of the Soul by a spiritual kind of Converse, as effectually as the Rhetoric and persuasives of fellow Creatures, that must be Transmitted by Sounds thro' material Organs and Vehicles. This is an Assertion so clear and indisputable, that I can see no reason why those ministring Spirits, the blessed Angels by the divine Appointment, may not be allowed capable of maintaining Intercourses of this nature, even with this lower World, since it only places their Power upon a level with accursed Spirits, who have on all hands a Power attributed to 'em, of influencing the Souls as well as Bodies of Men. And certainly God, whose infinite Knowledge and Wisdom enables him to adapt all his divine Succours to suitable Seasons

and



and Opportunities, could not exert 'em better, than when the Animal Part is disabled by Age, Sickness, or other humane Calamities. And certainly its highly agreeable to the divine Wisdom, when a Change of Mind and Conscience is wrought, to give 'em a deep sense of their Folly and Error, and consequently to throw 'em into the severest Agonies and Convulsions, before he raises 'em up by his special Restoratives, the refreshings of the Lord. And now certainly we have foundation enough to answer for the Contradictions of Conscience, and at the same time assert the Divine Oeconomy of it. This is an Hypothesis cannot be disputed in a state of Revelation: And tho' in a state of Nature God has not covenanted to govern Mankind by spiritual Succours, or the Effusions of his Holy Spirit on the hearts of Men, yet I do not find he has any where bound himself to the contrary; and its highly probable his infinite Goodness and Wisdom may sometime incline him to dispense his Favours on this part of his Off-spring; and consequently contribute to the Establishment of Conscience upon its true foundation, I mean according to the primitive Model and Oeconomy of it.

## CHAP. XXI.

*Of the Evidence of future Rewards,  
and Punishments from the Passages  
of Natural Conscience.*

**T**HAT Mankind was Originally Formed, and Created under the Conduct of a Law, and that Rewards, and Punishments are ascertained to the Observance, or Violation of this Law, has already been proved beyond any just colour of Dispute. That which remains, is to fix the Stage where this great Scene shall be displayed, and a Formal Distribution Transacted. Now I am perswaded it will be easily granted, that Rewards, and Punishments cannot well be Executed in this State of Life. For first, the Established Coercive Powers of this World can by no means pretend to it; they can determine nothing beyond the Surface, or External parts of the Action. And these must be handed to them upon the evidence of Senses, the Authority of Circumstances, and the Veracity of Men, and Sinners; so that very often, the Innocent is Sentenced

tenced to Act his Part in Sufferings, in the room of the Guilty. By this means, the substantial parts of the Action lie Dormant, and escape the most subtle Remarks, and Censures of Mankind; so that there may be a Thousand *whited Sepulchres*, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead Mens Bones, and of all uncleanness. But this is not all, for must we not admit a vast Scroul of Enormities, that the nicest observations can never pretend to reach, or fathom; some that are sheltered by Studied Retreats, and Privacies, others by passing no further than Thought, or Intention, and the inward Workings of the Mind, so that it's impossible that any thing less than an infinite Power, or a Searcher of Hearts and Reins, can pretend to state the Deservings of Men, and adjust an Allotment of Rewards and Punishments in proportion to them. Indeed, an All-wise Creator, that knoweth the very Thoughts long before, is abundantly qualified to finish his Dispersations of this kind, even in this Life. But yet in Crimes that are Publick, and Notorious, we sometimes see the Authors pass off the Stage of the World without any visible Marks of Di-

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vine Vengeance, at least, such as we may Read from others. It's true, God may Reward, or Punish by secret steps or motions, and by a train of Causes, and Events; but yet these are Methods not so agreeable to the Designs of infinite Wisdom, in Rewarding, or Punishing in this World, for when they are dispensed at a distance, and after an invisible manner, they cannot influence the Offender, or the Publick, because, by this means, they cannot well be resolved into the direct, and immediate causes of them; and consequently, the great design of such Dispensations is in a great measure lost, or stifled. But now, since it is concluded, that the Violation of Laws does not only infer a Right of Punishment, but that Punishment will infallibly follow upon the Violation of Laws; we may from hence further conclude, that there's another World assigned by God for a final, and strict Distribution of Rewards, and Punishments. And certainly, since God is a God of Justice, and has decreed Punishments, as well as Rewards; we must conclude, that his last Distributions will be Acted upon the nicest Rules of Justice, and consequently proportion-

ed according to the true Intrinsic Nature of every Action, without Prejudice, or Partiality, or the least Respect of Persons. These are truths that follow in direct, and easie consequences, from the nature of the things themselves. But then if we allow the Divine Economy of Conscience, it's impossible we can reject the evidence of them: That God should Establish a Register of our Actions in the very Frame of our Natures, is an uncontrollable Argument, that he has Created us to some solemn Tribunal. Nay further, that God should not only Create us with retentive Powers and Faculties, whereby we keep a kind of Diary of past Actions, but implant certain absolving, and condemning Powers upon them, whereby we are necessarily possessed with Apprehensions of Guilt, and Punishment, or Favour or Reward. It's a clear Indication there will be a Tribunal erected, where these Divine Powers will display, and exert themselves to the utmost pitch of Activity. The *Latitudinarian*, may (if he pleases,) bring Disgrace upon them, by resolving them into Superstitious Fears, and the Bias of Education; but I'm perswaded, it is unexceptionably

orably proved there's the Finger of  
 God in em. And therefore, we must  
 conclude, that the Powers of Natural  
 Conscience are only a kind of Vicege-  
 rent, or Substitute, that acts for a time  
 by way of Restraint on the one hand,  
 and Encouragement on the other, but  
 at last, she must give up all her Reports,  
 and resign to a Supreme Judicature, she  
 must as it were, *deliver up the Kingdom*  
*unto God*, and appear as a Witness, ra-  
 ther than a Judge. These are the Na-  
 tural Consequences, and Original De-  
 signs, and Uses of such Divine Powers,  
 for unless these be admitted, it's impos-  
 sible we should account for them, as the  
 Ordinances of an infinitely Wise Crea-  
 tor. But further, that which most pow-  
 erfully demonstrates a State of future  
 Rewards and Punishments, is the Ef-  
 forts of Conscience towards the last  
 Periods of Life. That the Powers of  
 Conscience should awake, and grow  
 Strong and Vigorous, when the Ani-  
 mal Powers grow Faint and Languid,  
 that her Apprehensions should be clear,  
 and Piercing, her Resentments Rigid and  
 Severe, and her Exultations full of Joy,  
 and Consolation, when the powers of  
 Animal Nature are sunk and wasted,  
 and

and ready to Expire, is an Infalible Demonstration that we are Acted by a Principle highly distinct from Matter, from Flesh, and Blood, or Animal Spirits, or in a word, a Principle that will Live and Act after this Earthy Tabernacle is dissolved. Indeed, when we consider that the Reflections of a well spent Life discover themselves at the point of Death, when the Passions of the Animal Part are sunk, and wasted, in the most grateful Applauses, and substantial Satisfaction: so that the whole World, and all its Charms and Beauties, appear flat and empty before it, what can a reasoning Mind conclude but that 'tis a Harbinger to some future Rewards. It implies a deep presention of some future Blessings that shall be conferred upon us by a Sovereign Power, as a *Recompence of that Labour of Love we have entertained for his Name's sake.* On the other hand, when we consider those insupportable Gripes and Convulsions, more bitter than the Pangs of Death, that are the fatal conclusion of a dissolute, impenitent Life; when we consider that the Tempest arises and grows loud and clamorous, in proportion to the decays of Nature, and tho' that

that cracks and groans and sobs, yet this will not be appeased; we must conclude that there are convictions that will be carried into another State, and not only torment, but impeach every impenitent Criminal, before some other Tribunal. Indeed, were there no certainty of Rewards and Punishments, annexed to the violation or observance of Laws, or were there an exact distribution made in this World, or in a Word, were there no real discovery of a divine Oeconomy of Conscience, then we must think of some other Method to dispel the Vapour. But since these are proved upon the highest evidences and Demonstrations, we must conclude that such black presages are the prologue to future Miseries, to certain Allotments, that will be the Award of some future Reckoning. These are Evidences so clear and undenyable, that if the *Latitudinarian* will still persist, I'm confident his only conviction will be an actual perception of the Fruits of his dissolute Life, and his Impregnable Infidelity.



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Now since it's abundantly demon-  
 strated that there's a divine Oeco-  
 nomy of Conscience, and that it rests on  
 the unalterable measures of moral Good-  
 nesses, or the original nature of things  
 themselves, we may with force of reason  
 conclude, that our past Actions shall be  
 chiefly tried by this Original Standard.  
 It may indeed be objected, That no o-  
 ther Conscience can be the measure of a-  
 ny Man's Condemnation but his own,  
 not upon any Actions than those he was  
 conscious of when committed. The first  
 part of the Objection is certainly an un-  
 controverted truth, for when God puts  
 any man on his Tryal upon the Evi-  
 dence of Conscience, it must certainly  
 be his own, and not another's Consci-  
 ence, but yet it's highly probable our  
 Consciences will not be such as they  
 were when enslaved by vicious Habits  
 and Dispositions, but reformed accord-  
 ing to the divine Oeconomy of Consci-  
 ence, and consequently the Original

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Standard of Conscience will become our own, and appear as Evidence against us. It's highly evident from what has already been suggested, that the Conscience of Men in another World will be fixed on a new bottom. It's highly probable that all the Minutes of every Action, together with the Nature and Reasons of the Line of Duty, will be displayed and presented to the view of the mind: So that there will not be only a new discovery of lost Ideas, Thoughts and Actions, but of their incompatibility with the Line of Duty; nay, there will be a discovery of the Reasons and Original of all Miscalriages; the Mind will plainly discern the Error and Absurdity of former Convictions; she will confess that the violence and importunity of Lust, or a habit of Thoughtlessness, or Inconsideration, was the true and genuine cause of 'em, and consequently the frame and Oeconomy of Conscience will not only be altered, according to the Intrinsic Nature of things, and received as every Man's own proper Conscience, but it will discover Sin and Guilt in the erring Conscience, and charge the mischief of it upon its proper owner, where ever the Errors appear to be contracted from the

the neglect of means of Information. For certainly as God has endued us with Faculties to instruct us in the Line of Duty, so he has made us capable of maintaining it in that Course and Order which he has established, and consequently of pursuing and embracing such Means as are truly conducive to the attainment of it; and therefore when proper Means are instituted or proposed, yet, as it were, lie before us in the common road of Thinking, the Mischiefs, or iniquity of an Action, by the Laws of Conscience, will be imputed to us, tho' it was committed with a persuasion of its Innocence, because the Order of Nature, and the Laws of Humane Action are as much perverted by acting without the use of established means, as contrary to inward Convictions; and tho' the Action in the precise nature of it is not willfully wicked, yet the neglect of Means may be justly esteemed willful, and consequently the Effects and mischiefs of the Action justly imputed. I will not deny but there are thousands of miserable Wretches in the World under such fatal Circumstances, that they seem to be placed out of the reach of due Means of Information; but

to judge precisely of this seems to be a peculiar of the searcher of Hearts and Reins. However I am perswaded the common Exigences and Necessities of Humane Nature will instruct Mankind in the most fundamental Rules of Natural Religion; and yet God will charge nothing upon us, but where he can convince our Conscience of notorious Neglects; and in this case it's consonant to the Rules of Justice, that Sentence should be passed not according to former, but present Convictions. Indeed it can never be imagin'd, that the great Judge of all the Earth in his final Awards to Mankind, will erect a Tribunal that had not its Original from him, I mean from the Convictions of an erroneous Conscience; and therefore since it is demonstrated that new Sentiments, and Convictions, will break in upon the Mind, even to the charging of Guilt upon those Neglects which were the immediate source of false Convictions, we may justly conclude that the judicial Proceedings of the Great Day shall be established upon a regulated Conscience; I mean, according to the Divine Oeconomy of it; and consequently it is not the Plea of former Convictions, nor  
want

want of consciousness when Enormities were committed, that will be sufficient to exempt any Man from the jurisdiction of it. For these may be resolved into Personal Neglects, and Personal Neglects are alone sufficient to drive a Guilt upon us. As for the want of consciousness it's a branch of the Objection not yet replied to: and therefore I shall make some few Remarks upon it. And first, it's certain as long as Enormities are committed upon personal Neglects, as in the case of Drunkenness, it is not necessary the Mind should be conscious of the whole process, when actually committed. It's abundantly sufficient, if upon a representation of Circumstances we shall at last be forced to own them, or ascribe the Commission of 'em to our selves, for this will bring us under the dominion of Conscience at the last day. Certainly we may with as much force of Reason plead an Exemption from the guilt of Enormities, which thro' tract of time were wiped off the Table of the Mind, as deny to account for Enormities, which when committed we were not conscious of, when it was some former Enormity had disabled us from being conscious of 'em;

whereas it can only be required in both cases that proper, and competent Methods are contrived to make us conscious at the last day, so as to pronounce our selves the Authors of *em*, for when this is done, Conscience will determine as effectually as if our present and past Convictions were consonant to each other. Upon the whole then it's visible, it is not the present state of any Man's Conscience, any farther than it accords with the Divine Oeconomy of Conscience, no more than any present Act of Conscientiousness, that will be received for a final measure of the Goodness or Evil of our Actions; and consequently of a final Condemnation or Deliverance, but Conscience founded on the express Laws of God, the sole Rule of Duty; and the Agreement or Disagreement of our Actions with them. I would not be mistaken, as if I intended to streighten, or fix Limits to the infinite Mercies of God; there's nothing but his own infinite Purity, Truth, or Justice, can at any time divert his Mercies; but yet I think it's evident that we shall be judged for our Actions, as they are in their own Nature, and that too on the Awards of a rectified Conscience, where-  
ever

even an erroneous Conscience can be charged with Guilt. No one can dispute the Guilt of an Erroneous Conscience, where the Error is propagated thro' willfull Enormities, or manifest Negligents. Thus far the facted Canon is express and clear, when we are told in the case of Error, that the Mind and Conscience is defiled, *Tit. 1. 15.* And certainly where ever there is Defilement, there must be Guilt, and where ever there is Guilt there is at least Punishment due. And I presume it's sufficiently demonstrated that lost Ideas will be revived, that every Action will appear in its proper Dress, and consequently the whole Oeconomy of Conscience will be changed. If what has already been offered be not conclusive, the State of the Wicked after Condemnation will infer it. Now certainly whoever allows the divine Oeconomy of Conscience must allow a future Judgment, and if there's a future Judgment, and Men to be judged by their Consciences, the most Hardened, Unrelenting Sinner, will be brought to a clear apprehension of the Line of Duty, and by this means forced to own the Justice of his Sentence; tho' his Conscience

was seered and past feeling, it shall now recover a double Force, and retain the quickest apprehension of Things; and Conscience thus enforced, and armed with fresh Power and Vigour, shall be the eternal Instrument of, increasing the Torments of the damned. Since then Conscience shall be thus regulated in Order to enhance, and perpetuate their Misery, we may justly conclude that it's Regulation will commence at the great Tribunal, in Order to ratify the sentence of Condemnation; and certainly since it must be allowed that Conscience will be an Instrument of future Condemnation, as well as Misery; we must conclude that it will be one and the same Conscience, acted by the same Measures and Principles, and of the same Extent and Latitude, and consequently a Conscience cleared from all Error and Mistake, Partiality or Connivance; and in a Word, a Conscience established according to the Divine Oeconomy of it, the Law of God, and the eternal Measures of Moral Goodness and Duty. This is that *Candle of the Lord*, as the Wiseman expresses it, that will display its Light into the deepest recesses of the Heart, and Search into the inward parts  
of



of the Belly, Prov. 20. 27. In a Word it will be the inward Voice or Word of God, quick and powerful and Sharper than any two Edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow, and as a discerner of the Thoughts, and intents of the Heart. Heb. 4. 12.

§. 2. From what hath been said it may not be improper to make some further Remarks upon Mr. Lock's Notions of Conscience. It's observable Mr. Lock makes Consciouness and Conscience the same, and Conscience to consist in nothing else, but our own Opinions, of our own Actions; and pursuant to this, he affirms that in personal Identity which he makes to consist in Consciouness, is founded all the Right and Justice of Favour, Rewards and Punishment. Book 2. c. 27. §. 18.

But certainly the Conscience that will prevail in the great day, will not be any Opinions we have entertained of Actions when Committed tho' taken up at large: No, we shall then be acted by no other Opinions, but those of a regulated Conscience, and they shall sit as Judges, even over former Opinions, that were engendered by Neglect or Carelessness, and nothing but invincible

Ignorance, or sincere Repentance, can deliver us from its Dominion. This is indisputably evident from the Regulations of Conscience, that shall be made according to the divine Oeconomy of it, whereby our Opinions of past Actions shall not be measured by former Convictions, but by the conformity of our Actions to the true Line of Duty, or means of Information. Again, that consciousness which some Men might be under when Enormities were committed, cannot be the foundation of future Punishment, but that Consciousness of past Actions which will arise from a regulated Conscience. For it is concluded that we may become conscious of Enormities committed, of which we were not conscious, when committed, and conscious of others by wrong Measures and Convictions; but it will be that Consciousness, and those Convictions we are under at the Great Tribunal, and result from a regulated Conscience, that will be the measure of a final Absolution or Condemnation. And certainly if Mr. Lock will not suffer his Notions to be guarded by these limitations, he must pardon me if I cannot comply with 'em, or cannot but esteem 'em dangerous and false. On this account

count. I cannot suffer an Instance, that seems to interfere with what is asserted, pass off without a few Remarks. Mr. Lock in order to the establishing his Notion of *Personal Identity*, brings in Examples committed in Drunkenness of which a Man is not conscious; and places them upon a level with those committed by a Man in his sleep, making him no more answerable for the one than the other. He indeed makes the Drunkard in this case obnoxious to the Civil Laws, for no other reason; but [Because in these cases they cannot distinguish what is Real from what is Counterfeit, and so the Ignorance in Drunkenness or Sleep, is not admitted as a Plea.] But in the great Day wherein the Secrets of all Hearts shall be laid open, it may be reasonable to think, no one shall be made to Answer for what he knows nothing of, but shall receive his Doom, his own Conscience accusing or excusing him. See Sect. 22. Book 2. Chap. 27. Here are a great many Passages that look with a very evil Aspect, and therefore I shall say something to each in their order. And first, I think this Author has drawn a very unjust Parallel between Crimes committed in Sleep and Drunkenness. It's well known that Sleep is a thing entailed on us as a Law, even

a Law

a Law established in the frame of our Beings, and commences upon the necessities of corruptible Nature, and therefore if Mischief accidentally follows, it cannot well be imputed, because it is founded in a Cause or Principle that is inseparable from Humane Nature, or rather is an Appendage of the most necessary Powers of it, that set us on a level with Brutes, and consequently the Actions that flow from it cannot be imputed. But I hope this Author cannot plead a necessity of Nature for Drunkenness. A quantity of generous Liquor may sometimes be required for the actuating the Spirits, but never to in-  
 roxicate, unman, or drown the Reason. In a word, Drunkenness argues a willful neglect in humane Conduct, and as such is an Act of a free Agent, and consequently the Actions that flow from it, tho' destitute of Choice or Deliberation are justly imputed. For in order to the imputing or charging an Action upon us, it is not necessary that it should proceed from the free exercise of Reason, or previous Deliberation at the very Moment when Committed. It is sufficient that it's owing to a Cause that is to be esteemed truly Deliberate and Wilful. If this were not so, it's impos-  
 sible

lible any Sin of Ignorance can be Cul-  
pable; a Position so wide from the line  
of Christian Duty, that every Heathen  
Moralist will teach this Author the Ab-  
surdity of it. I shall for once Refer him  
to *Aristotle*, because he has culled out  
the case of Drunkenness to confirm the  
Doctrine. He assures us, Ignorance is  
Punishable whenever the cause of it can  
be charged upon us, and for this Reason,  
pronounces Crimes committed in Drun-  
kenness, liable to double Punishment.

Και γὰρ ἡ αὐτὴ ἡ ἀγνοία καὶ ἡ ἐν αὐτῇ  
ἡ δόξα τῆς ἀγνοίας, οἷον τοῖς μεθύουσιν δι-  
πλά ταῦτ' ἐκείναι· ἢ γὰρ ἀρχὴ ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ἐν  
τῇ μὴ μεθύουσιν, τὸ πρὸς αὐτὴν τῆς ἀγνοίας,  
ἐν τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ τὴν ἐν αὐτῇ τοῖς νόμοις, αὐτὴ δὲ  
ἐν αὐτῇ, ἐν τῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ.  
*Ethic. ad Nichom. Lib. 3. Chap. 7.*

But to proceed: As for the practice of  
Civil Governments in punishing Crimes  
committed when Disguised by Drink,  
he has shamefully Misrepresented it,  
when he Suggests that the only Reason,  
is, because they cannot distinguish  
what is Real from what is Counterfeit;  
and so the Ignorance in Drunkenness, or  
Sleep is not admitted as a Plea. It's  
a known truth, that Civil Judicatures  
take cognizance of nothing, but the out-  
ward Act, and when this appears,  
they

they constantly ascribe the internal Principles of the Action, Knowledge and Freedom, where the Criminal is under no Natural Disabilities, so that the Reasons that induce them to proceed to Censure in cases of this Nature, can be no other, but those which this excellent Moralist has assigned; for every such Criminal has *αρχή ἐν αὐτῷ*, and is *κρίσιμος ὁ ἑαυτοῦ μὴ βουλομένου*. Tho' he was not Master of himself, when the Fact was committed, yet he is Acted by a Principle that made him Master of the cause of it; and consequently, the Government may exercise a Right of Punishment. Again, every Government pronounces the ignorance of Laws sufficiently Promulged, as well as ignorance of the Action in respect of the Relation it bears to the Law, an affected ignorance, and consequently, such as not only renders the Action criminal, but such as in the Eye of every Government is criminal in its own Nature; and this is the second Reason assigned for double Punishment. *Καὶ τὰς ἀγνοίας τὴν τῆς ἐκείνου νόμου, αὐτὸς ὁ δράστης, ὅτι μὴ γὰρ δύναται ὁ νόμος ἀλλοτρίως.* In a word, it's visible where there is *Αρχή ἐν αὐτῷ*, there the Action may be imputed, and consequently Criminal; and for this Reason, Governments constantly pronounce

nounce it so; but then when this is wanting, as in the case of down-right Madness, where the Mind rests under a Physical Disability, if Crimes or Mischiefs, are committed upon it, the Government only enquires into the Symptoms of Madness, and upon Evidence, Acquits the reputed Criminal; and in these cases I question not, but the great Judge of all the World will do the like. But now, I think 'tis perfect Demonstration, the true Reason why Humane Laws punish in the case before us, is not because they cannot distinguish certainly what is Real, what Counterfeit. *Thirdly*, As for the proceedings of the great Day, I presume, they may Lawfully move upon those Measures, and Principles, that Humane Tribunals have recourse to, as their undoubted prerogative, and tho Enormities committed thro Madness, or Sleep, may not be strictly accounted for; yet I'm perswaded, no Ignorance founded in Drunkenness, will ever be admitted a plea of Innocence, as is apparently Suggested by this Author. It's abundantly concluded, that Conscience will be Regulated according to the Divine Oeconomy of it; and that it will ascribe to its self, and yield an Assent to a great many Actions, which the present State of some Mens Consciences either *know nothing of*, or at least have caused them to be pronounced Innocent. And certainly, where the Conscience can be convinc'd that such a particular Enormity is to be resolv'd into willfull neglects, as in the case of Drunkenness, it will ascribe the

action,

Action, and charge a Guilt upon us, and by this means a Man may be haraſſed with an Accuſing Conſcience at the Great Day, when the Secrets of all Hearts ſhall be laid open for things he at preſent knows little of.

THE CLOSE.

I Have now performed what was at firſt deſigned, and I hope I have laid ſuch a Platform of Natural Religion, as is conſiſtent with the Doctrines of Revealed Religion, and the nature and reality of things; and I have been more particular, that I might obviate not only the Irreligious Notions, and Poſitions that obtain in the preſent Age, but obſtruct the growth of New Ones, by the Artificial, but Pernicious inſinuations of the Author, I have ſo much Animadverted upon. I have Formed no Deſigns from the underſtanding, but the advance of Truth, and the Maintenance of a Spirit of Religion, by Eſtabliſhing the Foundations of it; and if the performance does in ſome meaſure come up to it, and appears to be drawn according to the main Lines of Truth, I ſhall be ready to indicate it againſt the applauded Cavils of thoſe, that I am afraid are devoted to tear up the whole of Religion, both Root and Branch. But if among a great many Truths, I have made ſome falſe Steps, ſome few Errata that are any wiſe inconſiſtent with Truth, or Injurious to any part of Religion, or Piety, it is without Deſign, and upon the firſt Conviction, I ſhall make Satisfaction to God, and the World, by a free and ample Retraction.

FINIS.



